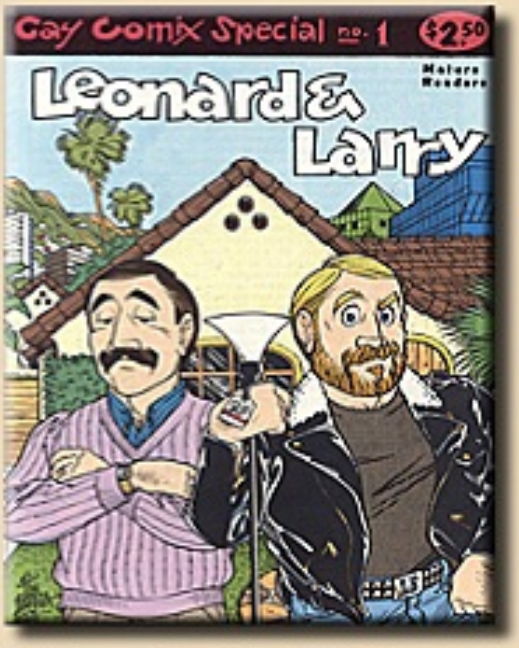


# Sir Real's

# UNDERGROUND COMIX CLASSIX

## Gay Comix Special #1

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2 - From The Editor
3 - Leonard & Larry
43 - Tim Barela (bio)

### Artists:

Tim Barela - 1, 3-44
Andy Mangels - 2(t)

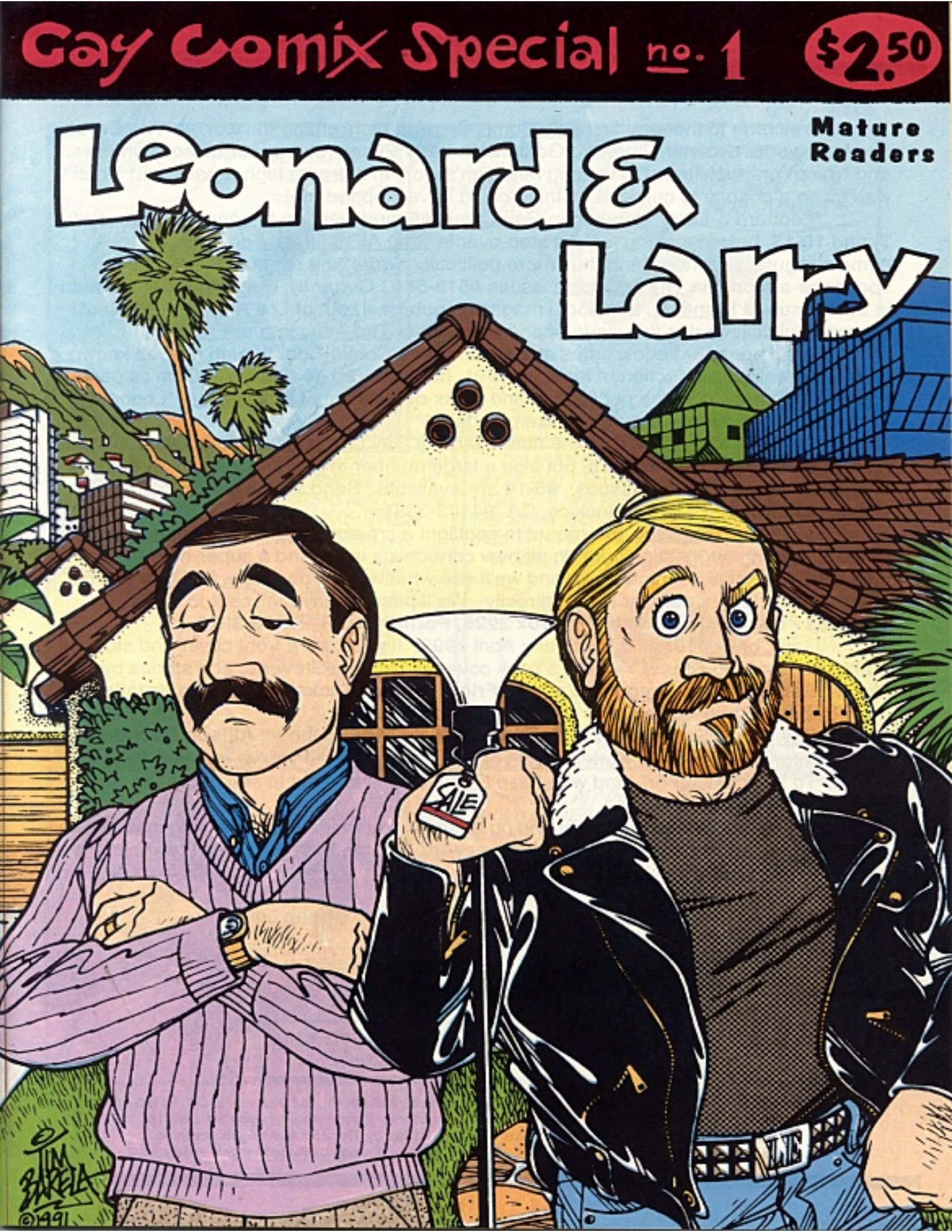
### Comments:

An all Tim Barela "Leonard & Larry" Special

Gay Comix Special no. 1 $2.50

# Leonard & Larry

Mature Readers



Welcome to the very first Gay Comix Special, highlighting the work of **Tim Barela** and his favorite two men, Leonard Goldman & Larry Evans (plus assorted sons, in-laws, and *gasp* grandchildren). I've long held Tim's work in extreme high regard, and when I was given a chance to collect it, nothing could have stopped me!

"Leonard & Larry" debuted in Gay Comix **#5**, and went on to appear in issues **#6, 7**, and **10-13**, before making a short stop-over in Strip AIDS USA. Forcing me to become a regular subsriber (and thus more politically aware) the strip landed a rotating spot once-a-month in The Advocate issues **#513-560**. Currently Tim's work can be seen in each issue of Frontiers, a national magazine published out of Los Angeles. Much of the material collected in this issue appeared in either The Advocate or Frontiers.

Tim's appeared a few times at the San Diego Comic-Con, though he was known to only a smaller sub-section of fans. In 1991, he appeared on a Gays In Comics panel I moderated there. With the publication and mass-distribution of this Special, "Leonard & Larry" will hopefully find a greater base of fans.

If you've never picked up the now-quarterly Gay Comix before, you've not only missed previous stories of Tim's, but also a large number of gay and lesbian cartoonists. If you're interested in back issues, **#6-14** are available. Send $3.50 apiece to Gay Comix, 395 Ninth St., San Francisco, CA 94103-3831.

Gay Comix Specials are meant to spotlight a creator or a theme, of interest to the readers. Among suggestions are an all-new cartoonists issue and a super-hero theme issue. Let me know your interests, and we'll see what we can do. Also, feel free to write letters for our letters page or to Tim directly. We'll pass on any mail sent to **Andy Mangels - editor, Gay Comix, PO Box 3226, Portland, OR 97208-3226.**

Gay Comix **#15** will be out early April 1992. It will have a front cover and story by **Ivan "Tales of the Closet" Velez**, a back cover by **Noreen Stevens**, and stories by **Donna Barr, Roberta Gregory, Vaughn Frick, Rhonda Dicksion, Andrea Natalie, Jeff Richard, Dave Young,** and **Jennifer Camper**!

Gay Comix Special #2 will be out in mid-July. This is the all-**Allison Bechdel** issue, featuring lots of new work and lots of classic material! If you've enjoyed Allison's "Dykes To Watch Out For" (and who hasn't?) check this one out to see her really cut loose!

Thanks to **Tim Barela** for providing hours of entertainment and loving insight with his two hot men. And speaking of which, Leonard & Larry, if you're ever in town, let me know. I'll be. . . er . . . we'll do lunch!

Keep Loving!

Andy Mangels

Front Cover "West Hollywood Gothic" by Tim Barela
Coloring by Michael Jay Goldberg

**GAY COMIX SPECIAL #1**, Spring 1992. Published by Bob Ross, 395 9th St., San Francisco, CA 94103-3831.
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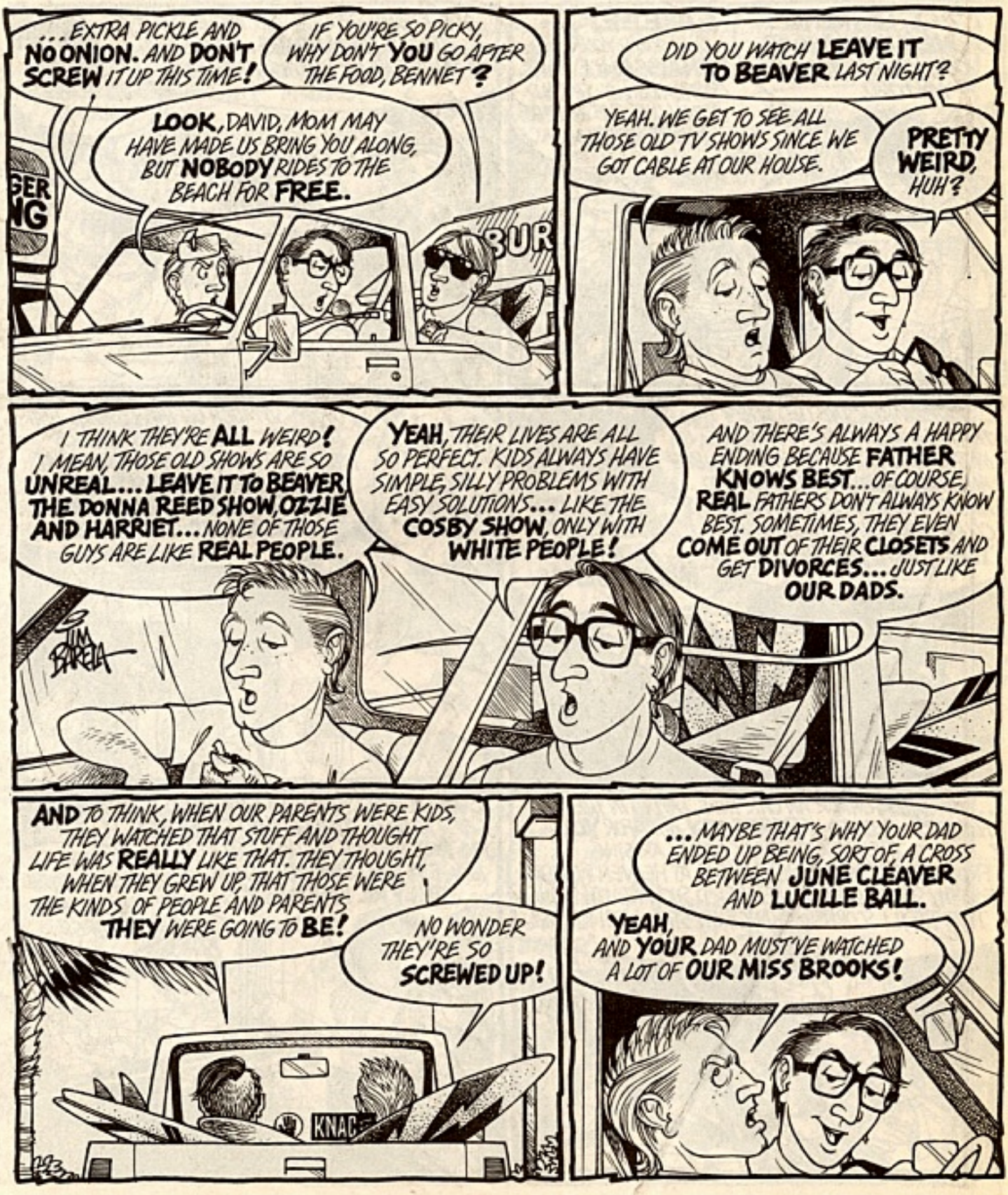
LEONARD, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
SCOURING THE TOILET.
NOW? SO EARLY IN THE MORNING? I HAVE TO GET READY FOR WORK.
I'M NOT STOPPING YOU! SINCE WHEN HAVE YOU TAKEN A SHOWER IN THE TOILET?
YEARS AGO, I WOKE UP MOST MORNINGS TO FIND SHARON FIXING BREAKFAST FOR THE KIDS IN HER BATHROBE AND CURLERS AND I'D WONDER HOW I EVER GOT THERE. THEN I'D FANTASIZE ABOUT HIM,...
...THE MAN OF MY DREAMS. SOMEDAY I'D GET OUT OF THAT FARCICAL MARRIAGE AND I'D FIND HIM. OUR LIFE TOGETHER WOULD PLAY JUST LIKE THE SHORT STORIES IN THOSE GAY MAGAZINES I USED TO HIDE IN THE GARAGE. HE'D BE MY GUY, A TOTAL TURN-ON, SEXY AND COMPLETELY IRRESISTABLE...
...BUT, FRANKLY, MY DEAR, YOU LOOK NO BETTER, IF NOT WORSE, IN THE MORNING THAN MY EX-WIFE DID.
DOMESTICITY ISN'T PRETTY.
© TIM BARELA

LEONARD, YOU REMEMBER FRANK'S SON, BENNET.
SURE. HI, BENNET.
RICHARD, YOU KNOW YOUR MOTHER COULD'VE MAILED THESE PAPERS TO ME... HOW'D YOU TWO GET HERE, ANYWAY?
BENNET IS SIXTEEN, NOW. HE HAS HIS LICENSE.
YEAH, IN FACT MY DAD GAVE ME HIS OLD PICKUP WHEN HE GOT HIS NEW JEEP.
MY DAD SAYS THAT, WHEN I TURN SIXTEEN, HE MIGHT GIVE ME HIS OLD POLICE KAWASAKI NOW THAT HE HAS A HARLEY AND DOESN'T RIDE IT ANYMORE.
THIS HOUSE IS PRETTY COOL.
THIS IS MY DAD'S LOVER'S HOUSE. LEONARD IS A PHOTOGRAPHER, YA KNOW. HE JUST DID A SPREAD IN VANITY FAIR.
MY DAD'S LOVER, BOB, IS ASSISTANT MUSIC DIRECTOR AT THE SOUTH COAST CIVIC LIGHT OPERA. THEY JUST DID LA CAGE AUX FOLLES.
WELL, MY DAD AND HIS LOVER GET TO LIVE IN THIS "COOL" HOUSE HERE IN WEST HOLLYWOOD, NEXT DOOR TO BEVERLY HILLS AND RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF EVERYTHING.
MY DAD'S HOUSE IN BELMONT HEIGHTS WAS FEATURED IN AN ISSUE OF ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST AND IS JUST THREE BLOCKS FROM THE BEACH.
WOW, MAN,...RADICAL!
WELL, DAD, SEE YA LATER. BENNET AND I ARE GONNA' GO HANG OUT ON MELROSE AND CHECK OUT THE BABES.
WHATEVER HAPPENED TO "MY DAD CAN BEAT UP YOUR DAD"?
HIS DAD JUST DID.
JIM BARELA

I WAS BEGINNING TO THINK THAT PLACES LIKE THIS WERE BECOMING AN ENDANGERED SPECIES.
GAWWD, I HAVEN'T BEEN IN A LEATHER BAR IN AGES!
YOU HAVEN'T BEEN SEEN IN PUBLIC IN A FLANNEL SHIRT SINCE JIMMY CARTER WAS PRESIDENT!
WELL, IT'S ONLY FAIR. WHEN WE GO TO VISIT YOU GUYS, THE FOUR OF US ALWAYS END UP IN SOME SWEATER DISCO -YOU KNOW HOW LARRY FEELS ABOUT WEARING ANYTHING THAT'S BEEN KNITTED.
WHERE IS LARRY, ANYWAY?
OVER AT THE BAR, TALKING TO SOME GUY.
DADDYS
MEN
BLEEP! BLEEP!
AH, YES, THAT RATHER LARGE, HAIRY BRUTE WITH THE GREAT CRO-MAGNON FLAIR FOR FASHION.
QUITE CHUMMY, THE TWO OF THEM. IS HE A FRIEND OF THE FAMILY?
I'VE NEVER SEEN THE GUY BEFORE.
BLEEP!
DO YOU SEE THAT? LARRY'S "FRIEND" TOOK A PENCIL AND PAPER FROM THAT EMPTY LUBE JAR AND IS WRITING DOWN SOMETHING!
I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT LARRY WOULD DO THIS RIGHT IN FRONT OF US!
AW GEEZ! I'M SURE IT'S NOT WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE. I KNOW LARRY; TRUST ME.
DON'T ACT SO NAIVE, LEONARD! PENCIL AND PAPER ARE KEPT AT A BAR FOR ONE REASON AND ONE REASON ONLY!
LEONARD, JUST WHAT DO YOU THINK THAT JEZEBEL LOVER OF YOURS IS GIVING THAT HAIRY APE, ANYWAY? A RECIPE?!
...BEAT THE EGG WHITES UNTIL STIFF. THEN CREAM THE YOLKES, SUGAR AND LEMON ZEST TOGETHER IN ANOTHER BOWL...
WHAT ABOUT THE VANILLA?
TIM BARELA

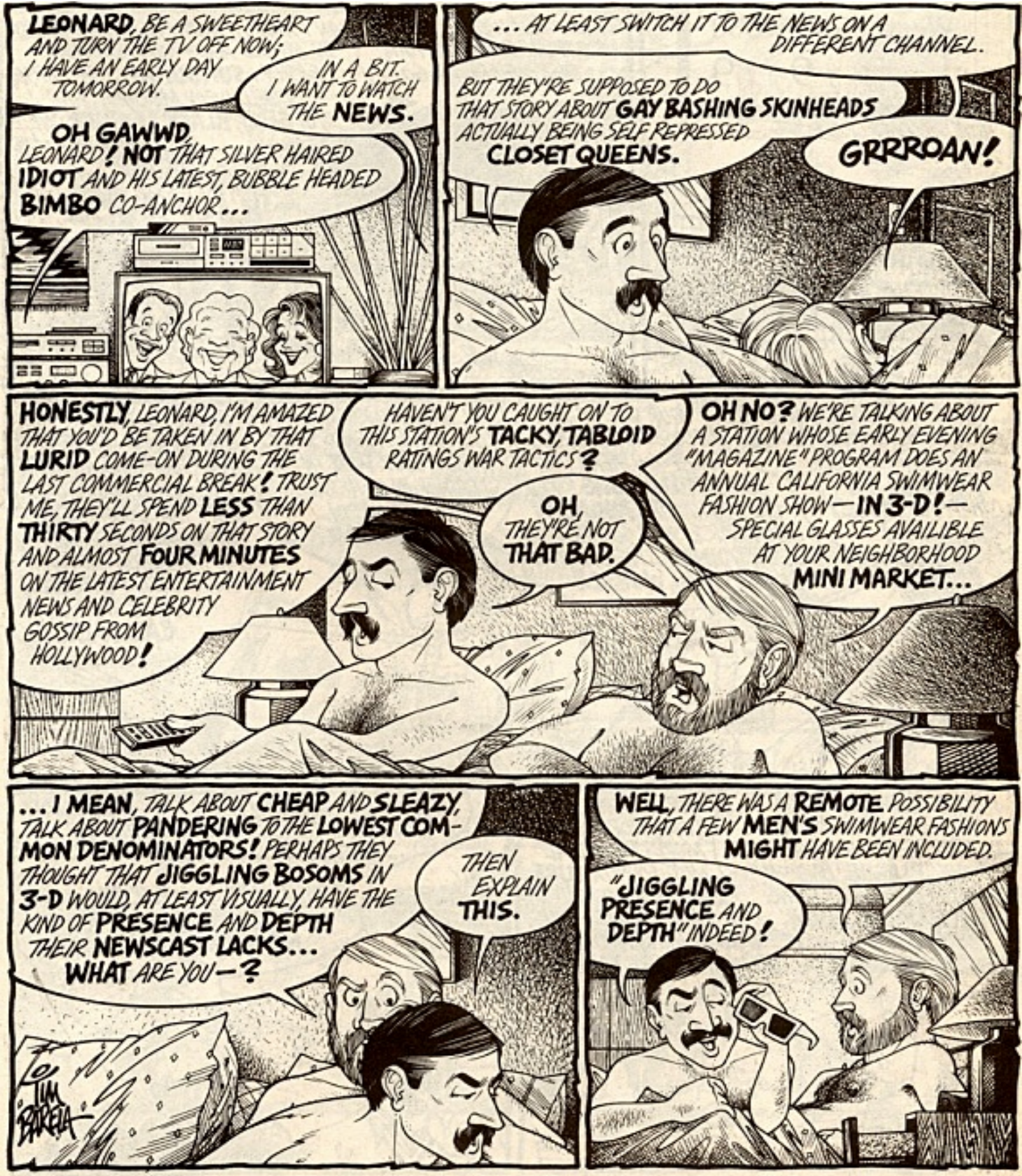
...THEY'RE BEAUTIFUL! AND THEY FIT SO WELL WHEN I TRIED THEM ON.
THAT PAIR IS $187.00, PLUS TAX.
OH, HANG THE PRICE! I WANT THESE BABIES.
LARRY'S
LEATHER
Cheap Ass
WELL, THEN, I'LL JUST GO AHEAD AND WRITE THOSE UP FOR YOU.
YA KNOW, IT'S FUNNY. BUT DID YOU EVER STOP TO THINK THAT THE MALE HORMONE THAT GIVES GAY FOLKS LIKE US A SEXUAL CHARGE FROM FETISHES LIKE LEATHER AND WEARING A TALLER PAIR OF BOOTS THAN ANYONE ELSE IN THE BAR ON FRIDAY NIGHT...
PLAY SAFELY!
...IS THE SAME MALE HORMONE THAT MAKES RURAL REDNECKS WANT TO OWN BIG, UGLY TRUCKS WITH BIG, USELESS TIRES AND HAVE DUMB GIRLFRIENDS WITH BIGGER BREASTS THAN ALL THEIR BUDDIES GIRLFRIENDS?
MEN EVERYWHERE ARE OBSESSED WITH HAVING BIGGER THIS AND LARGER THAT..."MUSCLE CARS" WITH BIGGER ENGINES, "EIGHTEEN WHEELERS" WITH LONGER TRAILERS, AUTOMATIC ASSAULT WEAPONS WITH BIGGER CLIPS... ARMIES WITH THE BIGGEST TANKS, NAVIES WITH THE BIGGEST BATTLE SHIPS, COUNTRIES WITH THE BIGGEST BOMB!...
PLAY SAFELY!
...IMAGINE, THE FATE OF WORLD PEACE AND OUR CIVILIZATION IS DEPENDANT ON MALE HORMONES AND THE FACT THAT, IN WESTERN CULTURE, WHAT MEN WOULD REALLY RATHER SHOW OFF AND BRAG ABOUT AND THREATEN EACH OTHER WITH IS KEPT ZIPPED POLITELY INSIDE THEIR PANTS!
JIM BALLA
...OH, WHAT A STRANGELY WONDERFUL, YET DANGEROUS THING IS THIS STUFF WE CALL TESTOSTERONE!
PROFITABLE, TOO.


...EXTRA PICKLE AND NO ONION. AND DON'T SCREW IT UP THIS TIME!
IF YOU'RE SO PICKY, WHY DON'T YOU GO AFTER THE FOOD, BENNET?
LOOK, DAVID, MOM MAY HAVE MADE US BRING YOU ALONG, BUT NOBODY RIDES TO THE BEACH FOR FREE.
DID YOU WATCH LEAVE IT TO BEAVER LAST NIGHT?
YEAH. WE GET TO SEE ALL THOSE OLD TV SHOWS SINCE WE GOT CABLE AT OUR HOUSE.
PRETTY WEIRD, HUH?
I THINK THEY'RE ALL WEIRD! I MEAN, THOSE OLD SHOWS ARE SO UNREAL... LEAVE IT TO BEAVER, THE DONNA REED SHOW, OZZIE AND HARRIET... NONE OF THOSE GUYS ARE LIKE REAL PEOPLE.
YEAH, THEIR LIVES ARE ALL SO PERFECT. KIDS ALWAYS HAVE SIMPLE, SILLY PROBLEMS WITH EASY SOLUTIONS... LIKE THE COSBY SHOW, ONLY WITH WHITE PEOPLE!
AND THERE'S ALWAYS A HAPPY ENDING BECAUSE FATHER KNOWS BEST... OF COURSE, REAL FATHERS DON'T ALWAYS KNOW BEST. SOMETIMES, THEY EVEN COME OUT OF THEIR CLOSETS AND GET DIVORCES... JUST LIKE OUR DADS.
JIM BARELA
AND TO THINK, WHEN OUR PARENTS WERE KIDS, THEY WATCHED THAT STUFF AND THOUGHT LIFE WAS REALLY LIKE THAT. THEY THOUGHT, WHEN THEY GREW UP, THAT THOSE WERE THE KINDS OF PEOPLE AND PARENTS THEY WERE GOING TO BE!
NO WONDER THEY'RE SO SCREWED UP!
KNAC
...MAYBE THAT'S WHY YOUR DAD ENDED UP BEING, SORT OF, A CROSS BETWEEN JUNE CLEAVER AND LUCILLE BALL.
YEAH, AND YOUR DAD MUST'VE WATCHED A LOT OF OUR MISS BROOKS!

'TIS I, LAWRENCE OF WEST HOLLYWOOD, YOUR HUMBLE SERVANT, MY LORD.
-SHREEEK!- YOU FOUND YOUR OLD RENAISSANCE FAIR COSTUME! WE SHOULD CLEAN OUT THE GARAGE MORE OFTEN.
AND I FOUND YOUR'S, TOO. HERE, PUT IT ON. ...AH, THE MEMORIES... I'M GOING TO MISS THE OL' RENAISSANCE FAIR.
THEY'RE STILL GOING TO HOLD IT.
YEAH, AT A COUNTY PARK IN SAN BERNARDINO; IT JUST WON'T BE THE SAME...
...REMEMBER THE OLD SITE? THAT OLD MOVIE STUDIO RANCH IN THE MOUNTAINS BEHIND MALIBU? ALL THOSE BEAUTIFUL HILLS AND ANCIENT OAK TREES?...HOW COULD THEY THINK OF BUILDING TRACT HOUSES THERE?!
REAL ESTATE DEVELOPERS ARE BORN WITH MUTANT GENES.
"WOULD A CONVENT TAKE A JEWISH GIRL?"
I SPENT SO MUCH ON THIS COSTUME THAT I COULDN'T AFFORD ADMISSION. REMEMBER? WE WENT ON THE DAY THAT RECITING ONE OF SHAKESPEARE'S LOVE SONNETS GOT YOU IN FREE. I SCREWED-UP SO BAD!...
...BUT LATER, UNDER AN OAK TREE, LAYING IN THE WILD-FLOWERS, I RECITED IT PERFECTLY JUST FOR YOU... "...LIKE TO THE LARK AT BREAK OF DAY ARISING FROM SULLEN EARTH, SINGS HYMNS AT HEAVEN'S GATE; FOR THY SWEET LOVE REMEMBER'D SUCH WEALTH BRINGS THAT THEN I SCORN TO CHANGE MY STATE WITH KINGS."
JIM BALLA '92
...WEST HOLLYWOOD, I SWEAR! GET A LOAD OF THESE TWO QUEERS! I'M NOT THE ONE WHO WANTED TO MOVE TO WEST HOLLYWOOD! LOOK, THEY'RE KISSING!!...
STOP SPYING ON THE NEIGHBORS, GEORGE.

...WELL, WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO THINK? WE PLAN THIS TRIP FOR TWO MONTHS, MAKE RESERVATIONS AT A PRIVATE, GAY RESORT HERE IN PALM SPRINGS AND YOU SPEND ALL WEEKEND FULLY CLOTHED AND SITTING IN THE SHADE!
YOU'RE A PRUDE, LARRY EVANS, A CHICKEN, FAGGOT PRUDE!
YOU PARAPHRASE MAUPIN BADLY, ROBERT, AND I STILL HAVE SENSITIVE SKIN.
LEAVE HIM ALONE, BOB; YOU DON'T HAVE TO SLEEP WITH HIM IF HE BURNS. IT'S LIKE LAYING NEXT TO A TOUCHY, SPOTTED, COOKED LOBSTER!
SO, LARRY, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT THAT CHEAP CHIC BOUTIQUE NEXT DOOR AND THEIR BIG BUY OUT OFFER? FOR THAT MUCH MONEY, THEY MUST WANT YOUR SHOP BAD.
BUT I HAVE NO REASON TO SELL. BUSINESS IS GOOD, THANKS TO ALL THE STRAIGHT RICH, URBAN BIKERS AND TERMINAL MELROSE AVENUE TRENDIES WHO'D NEVER ADMIT TO HAVING A LEATHER FETISH AS EASILY AS MY GAY COUSTOMERS WOULD.
STILL, ALL THAT MONEY WOULD BE NICE... I'VE ALWAYS DREAMED OF OPENING MY OWN BAR ON THE EAST SIDE OF TINSEL TOWN.
GAWWD, THAT'S ALL I'D NEED!
WHAT WOULD IT BE? SWEATER PALACE OR LEATHER LOUNGE?
"LEATHER LOUNGE," OF COURSE.
LARRY'S LAVENDER LEATHER LOUNGE. THE NAME DEFINITELY HAS A CERTAIN CACHET.
VERY FUNNY, BUT NOT QUITE, ROBERTO. I'D NEED A NAME THAT WAS SIMILAR TO THOSE OF OTHER, LOCAL LEATHER ESTABLISHMENTS— THE GAUNTLET, CUFFS, THE SPIKE— SOMETHING INANIMATE YET CRUDE WITH A SLIGHT AIR OF DANGER... HOW ABOUT THE NAIL? I LIKE THAT! THE RUSTY NAIL.
"CRUDE" WITH AN AIR OF "DANGER"? MAYBE FOR BAREFOOT BOYS ON A HOT AUGUST DAY, BUT NOT TO A BUNCH OF GUYS STANDING AROUND IN LEATHER AND STEELTOED BOOTS!
PERHAPS, "RUSTY" REFERS TO A PARTICULAR SHADE OF NAIL POLISH.
OH, DO SHUT UP!

...I CAN'T UNDERSTAND YOU, LARRY. BACK IN OUR HOTEL ROOM IN PALM SPRINGS, YOU KEPT SAYING, "THIS IS GREAT, WE HAVE TO GET ONE FOR OUR BEDROOM."
BUT THAT WAS BEFORE I KNEW HOW THESE THINGS WENT TOGETHER. DID YOU TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT IT WHEN YOU OPENED THE BOX?...
...THAT MECHANISM WEIGHS A TON! THE WHOLE THING HANGS FROM A SINGLE BRACKET BOLTED TO A CEILING JOIST. IT JUST SITS IN A LITTLE CRADLE IN THE BRACKET, ROCKING BACK AND FORTH, WITHOUT ANYTHING ELSE HOLDING IT IN PLACE!
GRAVITY AND IT'S OWN WEIGHT HOLD IT IN PLACE...
...THE FAN IS MADE THAT WAY SO IT CAN ROCK AND PIVOT FREELY TO COMPENSATE FOR CENTRIFUGAL FORCE AS IT SPINS AROUND. IT'S PERFECTLY SAFE.
LEONARD, THAT THING IS GOING TO BE HANGING OVER OUR BED! I KEEP SEEING THE TWO OF US ASLEEP SOME SULTRY EVENING: I'M LAYING ON MY BACK AND I'M AT—YOU KNOW—ATTENTION; THERE'S NOTHING BUT A SHEET BETWEEN ME AND THOSE MONSTEROUS, SPINNING BLADES.
...THEN, SUDDENLY, AN EARTHQUAKE HITS, KNOCKING THE THING OUT OF IT'S BRACKET, SENDING IT SPINNING DOWN ON TOP OF ME! LEONARD, DON'T YOU SEE? THAT FAN IS JUST A HOME VERSION OF THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM!
OH, FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE!
I'M SERIOUS! EACH HOT SUMMER NIGHT I'LL LAY HERE, WATCHING THAT THING SPINNING OVERHEAD, WAITING HELPLESSLY FOR THAT FATEFUL JOLT, FEELING JUST LIKE... JUST LIKE...
© TIM KREKA
JUST LIKE A BARGAIN SALAMI IN THE MEAT CASE AT A KOSHER DELI?
HEY! WE'RE NOT PAYING YOU TO IMPERSONATE HENNY YOUNGMAN UP THERE!!


LEONARD, BE A SWEETHEART AND TURN THE TV OFF NOW; I HAVE AN EARLY DAY TOMORROW.
IN A BIT. I WANT TO WATCH THE NEWS.
OH GAWWD, LEONARD! NOT THAT SILVER HAIRED IDIOT AND HIS LATEST, BUBBLE HEADED BIMBO CO-ANCHOR...
...AT LEAST SWITCH IT TO THE NEWS ON A DIFFERENT CHANNEL.
BUT THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO DO THAT STORY ABOUT GAY BASHING SKINHEADS ACTUALLY BEING SELF REPRESSED CLOSET QUEENS.
GRRROAN!
HONESTLY, LEONARD, I'M AMAZED THAT YOU'D BE TAKEN IN BY THAT LURID COME-ON DURING THE LAST COMMERCIAL BREAK! TRUST ME, THEY'LL SPEND LESS THAN THIRTY SECONDS ON THAT STORY AND ALMOST FOUR MINUTES ON THE LATEST ENTERTAINMENT NEWS AND CELEBRITY GOSSIP FROM HOLLYWOOD!
HAVEN'T YOU CAUGHT ON TO THIS STATION'S TACKY, TABLOID RATINGS WAR TACTICS?
OH, THEY'RE NOT THAT BAD.
OH NO? WE'RE TALKING ABOUT A STATION WHOSE EARLY EVENING "MAGAZINE" PROGRAM DOES AN ANNUAL CALIFORNIA SWIMWEAR FASHION SHOW—IN 3-D!—SPECIAL GLASSES AVAILIBLE AT YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD MINI MARKET...
...I MEAN, TALK ABOUT CHEAP AND SLEAZY, TALK ABOUT PANDERING TO THE LOWEST COMMON DENOMINATORS! PERHAPS THEY THOUGHT THAT JIGGLING BOSOMS IN 3-D WOULD, AT LEAST VISUALLY, HAVE THE KIND OF PRESENCE AND DEPTH THEIR NEWSCAST LACKS... WHAT ARE YOU—?
THEN EXPLAIN THIS.
WELL, THERE WAS A REMOTE POSSIBILITY THAT A FEW MEN'S SWIMWEAR FASHIONS MIGHT HAVE BEEN INCLUDED.
"JIGGLING PRESENCE AND DEPTH" INDEED!
TIM BARELA

West Hollywood
1 9 9 9
MUST YOU WEAR THAT STUPID LOOKING HAT EVERYWHERE WE GO?
CAN I HELP IT THAT I'VE GROWN BALD IN MY OLD AGE? YOU KNOW HOW EASILY I SUNBURN!... OF COURSE, I COULD WEAR MY OTHER HAT, THE SEXY, BLACK LEATHER ONE...
...THAT IS, IF I COULD FIND IT! BUT A CERTAIN SOMEONE KEEPS REARRANGING MY THINGS AND I CAN'T FIND DIDLEY ANYMORE!
YOUR SIDE OF THE CLOSET IS A MESS! AND IF YOU MEAN THAT STUIPID LOOKING BIKER CAP YOU HAD THE AUDACITY TO WEAR TO YOUR SON, DAVID'S WEDDING...WELL, THAT'S EVEN WORSE!
I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW THAT LOTS OF OUR FRIENDS STILL THINK I LOOK HOT IN LEATHER IN GENERAL AND THAT HAT IN PARTICULAR.
OF COURSE YOU LOOK "HOT!" YOU'RE OLD AND FAT AND LOOK LIKE A ROAST PIG IN ALL THAT LEATHER STUFF THAT DOESN'T FIT YOU ANYMORE!...AND IF YOU MEAN BOB AND FRANK, FRANK WEARS BIFOCALS AND BOB HAS CATARACTS!
I DON'T KNOW HOW WE'VE MANAGED TO STAY TOGETHER ALL THESE YEARS. IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE "PLAGUE" BACK IN THE 80'S, EVERYBODY GOING MONOGAMOUS, I THINK I WOULD'VE LEFT A LONG TIME AGO!
WELL, DON'T LET THAT STOP YOU ANY MORE; THEY'VE ALMOST FOUND A CURE. GO ON! GO FIND YOURSELF SOME YOUNG, DUMB THING WHO'LL PUT-UP WITH YOU LIKE I HAVE!
OH, YOU'RE SO SEXY WHEN YOU GET ANGRY! WHEN YOU TWITCH YOUR MUSTACHE LIKE THAT, YOU DRIVE ME WILD!
MY DENTURES SLIPPED.
YOU KNOW, I'M SO EXCITED, I FEEL LIKE TAKING YOU HOME RIGHT NOW AND... AND...!!

AND WHAT?
GOSH... I CAN'T REMEMBER.
AAGGGGH!!
NOW WHAT?
OH, LEONARD, I HAD THE MOST HORRIBLE NIGHTMARE! IT WAS WAY IN THE FUTURE; 1999. WE WERE BOTH OLD AND GRAY. YOU HAD DENTURES AND I WAS BALD AND FAT AND COULDN'T FIT INTO MY LEATHER ANYMORE!
...WE WERE JUST LIKE ALL THE OTHER LITTLE, OLD MEN SITTING IN PLUMMER PARK, FEEDING THE PIGIONS AND ARGUING ABOUT STUPID THINGS.
WHAT'S SO UNUSUAL ABOUT THAT?
...THEN I THREATENED TO LEAVE YOU AND YOU SAID OK! BUT THE WORST THING OF ALL WAS THAT I WAS SO OLD THAT I HAD FORGOTTEN HOW TO MAKE LOVE TO YOU!
NOBODY'S LEAVING ANYBODY. AND AS FAR AS SEX IS CONCERNED, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT; IT'S LIKE RIDING A BICYCLE. AND EVEN IF YOU DID FORGET, OR GOT FAT, OR GREW BALD, I'D STILL LOVE YOU. THERE ISN'T ANYONE ELSE I'D RATHER SPEND THE REST OF MY LIFE WITH! TURNING GRAY TOGETHER, GROWING OLD,...
...WAIT A MINUTE... YOU SAID 1999. THAT'S JUST TEN YEARS FROM NOW. IN TEN YEARS, I'LL BE 46 AND YOU'LL ONLY BE 47.
DON'T GET TECHNICAL WITH MY NIGHTMARES, LEONARD.
TIM BARELA

I SEE A WHOLE POD OF WHALES THIS TIME.
...YOU'RE KIDDING! SHE STILL DOESN'T KNOW?
MOTHER'S QUITE OLD. IF, IN THE TIME SHE HAS LEFT, IT MAKES HER HAPPY TO DRIVE DOWN FOR A VISIT AND THINK THAT BOB IS JUST MY ROOMMATE...
I'M PERFECTLY WILLING TO SLEEP IN MY STUDIO FOR THE WEEKEND JUST TO AVOID THE HOLY WRATH OF THE OLD FUNDIMENTALIST BAT!
ROBERT, YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT MY MOTHER!
YES, THAT ELDERLY SPACE CADET WHO WATCHES JIMMY SWAGGART ON OUR T.V. AND TALKS ABOUT CHILD MOLESTERS, BABY KILLERS AND HOMO-SEXUALS ALL IN THE SAME BREATH!
BOB, YOU'RE NOT SERIOUS, ARE YOU?
MY DEAR LEONARD, I HAVEN'T TOLD YOU THE WORST OF IT...THE OTHER DAY SHE FINALLY REAL-IZED THAT MY LAST NAME IS MENDEZ...
...SHE ALWAYS KNEW I WAS A MUSICIAN, NOW SHE WANTED TO KNOW IF I PLAYED IN A MARIACHI BAND! THEN SHE ASKED IF I WAS CATHOLIC. "NOT ANY MORE", I SAID.
..."THAT'S GOOD," SHE SAID AND THEN WENT ON TO IMPLY THAT ALLEGIANCE TO THE POPE AND PRAYING TO STATUES IS WHAT KEEPS MOST "SPANIARDS" IN IGNORANCE AND POVERTY, PICKING STRAWBERRIES AND COMMITING PETTY THEFTS WHEN WE'RE NOT SPRAY PAINTING EAST L.A. WITH GANG GRAFFITI!!
ONE CAN IMAGINE WHAT SHE'D HAVE SAID ABOUT YOUR SORDID KOSHER ROOTS. I WAS LIVID!
GOOD LORD! WHAT DID YOU DO?
WELL, FIRST I CROSSED MYSELF. THEN I WENT OUT AND RIPPED-OFF THE OL' BAT'S HUBCAPS!
NOW I SEE A COUPLE OF HUNKY NUMBERS, IN DOWN VESTS AND HIP BOOTS, SURF FISHING ON THE BEACH.
OOO, REALLY?! LET ME HAVE A LOOK!
...SURE WISH I'D HAD A CAN OF SPRAY PAINT.
TIM BARELA '92

LARRY?...LARRY EVANS? LARRY EVANS, MY MAN! GET A LOAD OF THE WHISKERS AND THE EARRING...WOW! I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU IN ...TWENTY YEARS!
WELL, THAT IS WHY THEY CALL IT A TWENTY YEAR HIGH SCHOOL REUNION. BY THE WAY,... WHO ARE YOU?
GARY, GARY STRINGFELLOW, MAN! HOW COULD YOU FORGET? THE TWO OF US USED TO BE JOINED AT THE HIP; TUSTIN HIGH'S TWIN PARTY ANIMALS. ...HEY, REMEMBER THE NIGHT WE BOTH GOT SO DRUNK THAT WE THREW UP OVER THE EDGE OF THE BALCONY AT THE YOUTH CONCERT AT THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IN SANTA ANA?...
...YEAH, BUT THAT WASN'T HALF AS GREAT AS THE TIME THE TWO OF US CLIMBED UP ON THE ROOF AT SHARON DELBART'S GRADUATION BARBECUE AND WIZZED TOGETHER INTO THE PUNCH BOWL!....SAY, DIDN'T YOU END UP MARRYING THAT CHICK?
UH, YES, ABOUT SEVEN MONTHS LATER...WE HAVE TWO BOYS, SIXTEEN AND FOURTEEN.
YEAH, YOU ALWAYS DID HAVE GREAT TASTE IN WOMEN; A REAL GAZONGAS MAN! SO, WHERE IS OL' JOLLY JUGS, ANYWAY?
AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE, I GUESS. BUT I'M AFRAID SHARON AND I DIVORCED TEN YEARS AGO.
HEY, CAN'T KEEP A GOOD MAN DOWN!
WELL, NOT EXACTLY. I SORT'VE GOT INVOLVED IN ANOTHER RELATIONSHIP RIGHT AFTER. IT'S BEEN LIKE THAT EVER SINCE.
OH YEAH? WELL, SHE MUST'VE BEEN WORTH IT! SO, WHERE IS SHE? WHERE IS THE NEW LITTLE/BIG WOMAN? I WAN'NA MEET HER!
SHE'S RIGHT HERE. THE NAME'S LEONARD, LEONARD GOLDMAN. ...SO, "A REAL GAZONGAS MAN."
LEONARD, I SWEAR, IF YOU BREATHE A WORD OF THIS TO BOB OR FRANK OR ANYONE, YOU'RE SLEEPING IN THE GUEST ROOM FOR A MONTH!!
JIM BARRY

LARRY?... LARRY, ARE YOU STILL MAD AT ME?
YES.
I GUESS YOU'RE STILL NOT TALKING TO ME, EITHER.
YES.
I SUPPOSE THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BED IS PRETTY EMPTY WITH ME SLEEPING IN THE GUEST ROOM. ...IS IT?
YES.
I KNOW IT'S ONLY BEEN TWO DAYS, BUT I REALLY MISS BEING ABLE TO CUDDLE UP NEXT TO YOU IN THE NIGHT. ...DO YOU MISS ME?
YES.
WELL, GOSH, I DON'T KNOW. I MEAN, YOU DID SAY THAT I WAS SUPPOSED TO SLEEP IN THE GUEST ROOM FOR A WHOLE MONTH. I DON'T KNOW IF I'VE BEEN PUNISHED SUFFICIENTLY YET OR IF...
AW, CAN IT AND GET YOUR ASS IN BED!
JIM BALENA
WHO NEEDS A MARRIAGE COUNSELOR WHEN YOUR LOVER IS SUCH A SOFT TOUCH!
SHUT UP.

So, Richard, here you are, sixteen years old, with your new driver's license and your new girlfriend, driving your mom's car to your dad's for dinner.
I know, I know... I'm growing up too fast.
No. I'm growing old too fast!
If you like, Debbie, I can set a fork out for you.
Oh No, it's cool. I mean, like, these days, only doofuses and dweebs don't know how to eat with chopsticks. Like, I'm totally normal.
BON JOVI
...Debbie is just about the coolest girl I've ever met! I mean, like at the beach, she doesn't just stand around trying to get all the guys to look at her. Debbie has her own surfboard and wetsuit and everything! She's so cool!
Just like your ol' man; I insisted that your mother have her own car.
...and so I asked Richie, "What's wrong with your dad, anyway? Is he some kind of big gnarly ogre or something? I really want to meet him." So, he finally told me. He said, "My dad's gay. You know, a homosexual"...
BON JOVI
...and I said, "Oh M' God, like, I could care, you know!" I mean, like, my dad's a shriner. If I can handle that, I can handle anything!
BON JOVI
I swear, Debbie is just too cool!
Totally.
TIM BARELA

...AND TO THINK, WE'VE LIVED LONG ENOUGH TO NOT ONLY SEE FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY RETURNING TO THE OLD COUNTRY, BUT ALSO NORMAN'S YOUNGEST, LITTLE NATHAN, ON THIS HIS BAR MITZVAH DAY... SUCH A BLESSING!
IF ONLY MY ISAAC HAD BEEN SO BLESSED... HE'D HAVE BEEN SO PROUD OF HIS GRANDSON!
SO, ESTHER, WHEN IS YOUR YOUNGEST, LEONARD, GOING TO SETTLE DOWN AND FINALLY GIVE YOU HIS OWN LITTLE NATHAN?
LISTEN, SOPHIE, LONG LIFE MAY BE A BLESSING, BUT IF I WERE TO HAVE TO LIVE THAT LONG IT WOULD BE A CURSE!
HAZELT
HERE IT COMES! REMEMBER, YOU CAME ALONG TO GIVE ME MORAL SUPPORT.
AND TO HELP YOUR BROTHER, BERNIE, POLISH OFF THE KNISHES. IN THE MEANTIME, YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN.
...MY FRIEND, IRMA LIPSKI. WELL, IRMA HAS A SINGLE DAUGHTER, LUCILLE. SURE, LUCILLE'S DIVORCED AND ALREADY HAS THREE KIDS, BUT SHE'S ONLY THIRTY TWO AND STILL GOOD LOOKING. MAYBE LEONARD AND LUCILLE...
I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS FAMILY! I GIVE YOU PEOPLE MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS OF THE OBVIOUS AND YOU GIVE ME BACK TWENTY YEARS OF DENIAL!
...CLASS, FOR THE LAST TIME... I'M NOT INTERESTED IN WOMEN; I'M GAY—ALWAYS HAVE BEEN, ALWAYS WILL BE. THIS BEARDED MAN WITH THE MOUTH FULL OF KNISHES IS, AND HAS BEEN FOR THE PAST TEN YEARS, MY LOVER. WE LIVE TOGETHER, SLEEP TOGETHER, WE HAVE SEX...TOGETHER! ...ANY QUESTIONS?
© JIM BARELA 2
DON'T WORRY, ESTHER, ALL CHILDREN GO THRU PHASES.
YA KNOW, IT MIGHT MAKE MOM HAPPY IF YOU COULD ARTIFICIALLY INSEMINATE SOME NICE LESBIAN COUPLE. FOR THAT MATTER, MY EX-WIFE...
SHUT UP, BERNIE!

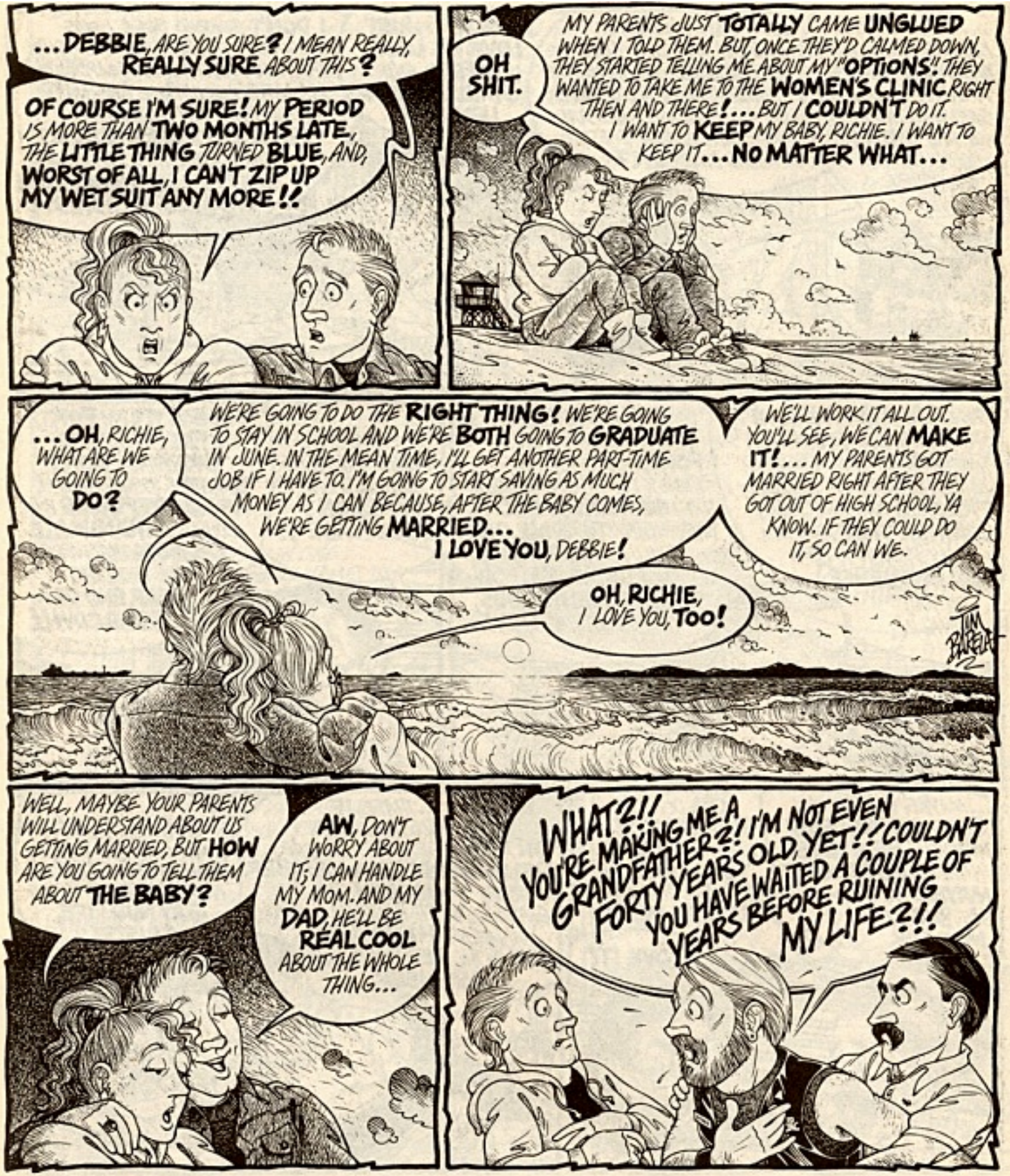
...THESE ARE TERRIBLE! OVEREXPOSED, GRAINY... AND WE LOOK LIKE DORKS! ...I WONDER WHAT F-STOP THE GUY USED.
SAVE YOUR PROFESSIONAL OPINION, LEONARD. YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO LOOK PALE AND DORKY IN A HIGH SCHOOL REUNION MEMORY BOOK.
OH LOOK, HERE'S THAT NICE FUNDAMENTALIST COUPLE FROM HELL, BILL AND ROBERTA DORNAMYER... I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE THAT YOU GUYS USED TO CALL THIS MOUSY MARILYN QUAYLE CLONE "RANDY ROBERTA".
YOU DIDN'T KNOW HER BACK THEN.
WELL, THAT'S EASIER TO SWALLOW THAN WHAT HER HORSE'S REAR END OF A HUSBAND SAID AT THE TOP OF HIS LUNGS IN FRONT OF EVERYBODY, INCLUDING YOUR EX-WIFE, WHEN HE SAW US HAVING OUR PICTURE TAKEN TOGETHER.
...WHAT YOU HAD TO SAY TO HIM WAS COLD!
I MERELY ANSWERED HIS RIDICULOUS ACCUSATIONS: WE WERE IN ORANGE COUNTY FOR MY TWENTY YEAR HIGH SCHOOL REUNION, NOT TO "MOLEST AND RECRUIT" TEEN AGE BOYS IN PUBLIC RESTROOMS! AND, IF HE REALLY THOUGHT SUCH A THING, HE WAS A BIGGER PERVERT THAN I'D EVER BE!
NOT THAT, THE OTHER.
THAT WAS JUST AS TRUE; I DON'T KNOW A SINGLE GAY PERSON WHO WAS RECRUITED, MUCH LESS MOLESTED. BUT IF I PERSONALLY EVER HAD A TRAUMATIC, LIFE ALTERING, EMASCULATING SEXUAL EXPERIENCE IT HAD TO HAVE BEEN THAT NIGHT IN '69, AFTER THE BIG GAME, WHEN RANDY ROBERTA GAVE ME HEAD UNDER THE BLEACHERS.
I ENJOYED THE TWO CENTS THAT SHARON PUT IN...
"YOU RUINED HIM FOR ME YOU CHEAP SLUT, I NEVER HAD A CHANCE!"
...YOUR EX CAN BE PRETTY COOL WHEN SHE WANTS TO.

KNOCK KNOCK
TRICK OR TREAT!
LEONARD, HIDE THE CANDY.
¡HOLA, COMPADRE!
WHAT ARE YOU GUYS DOING HERE?
THAT BIG AIDS BENEFIT COSTUME BALL IS TONIGHT.
JUST THINK, ALL THOSE QUEENS—BAD DRAG SIMPLY FOR DAYS! —THEN WE WALK IN...
WE JUST HAD TO STOP BY ON OUR WAY UP AND SHOW YOU HOW I LOOK IN YOUR UNIFORM—THE TOY GUN WAS MINE WHEN I WAS A KID.
...WELL?...
YOU KNOW, IN ALL MY YEARS, I NEVER DREAMED THAT WEARING A UNIFORM COULD BE SO...SO EXCITING! AT LEAST, NOT BEFORE I TRIED IT ON AND SAW MYSELF IN THE MIRROR.
I SWEAR, I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO GET HIM OUT OF THAT DAMN THING! EVERY DAY, AFTER WORK, HE PUTS IT ON AND GOOSE STEPS AROUND THE HOUSE IN LARRY'S BOOTS LIKE A PROPER LITTLE STORM TROOPER!
FRANK HASN'T ACTUALLY TRIED TO USE THOSE HANDCUFFS ON YOU, HAS HE?
HE WOULDN'T DARE.
LISTEN, FRANK, IF YOU AND BOB REALLY WANT TO DO IT UP RIGHT AND MAKE THE DESIRED IMPRESSION, LET ME LOAN YOU ONE OF MY BADGES, AS WELL.
...TRUST ME, A STAR SHAPED RHINE STONE BROACH JUST SPOILS THE WHOLE EFFECT.
TIM BARELA
GAWWD, THIS WHOLE WEEK HAS BEEN LIKE A PARTICULARLY BAD EPISODE OF "CHIPS"!
OH, DON'T BE SILLY. ...EVERY EPISODE OF "CHIPS" WAS PARTICULARLY BAD.

...ADMIT IT, LARRY, YOU WERE LOOKING AT HIM—YOUR EYES WERE LIKE SAUCERS!
I WAS NOT "LOOKING" AT HIM... I DID NOTICE HIM. HOW COULD I HELP BUT NOTICE A BIG, HOT LOOKING BIKER IN SKIN-TIGHT BLACK LEATHER PANTS SITTING JUST INCHES FROM THE CAR WINDOW?... I JUST NOTICED, I DIDN'T LOOK.
OH, I STAND CORRECTED. YOU DIDN'T LOOK, "JUST NOTICED"... THE SAME WAY I JUST NOTICED THE WINDOW STEAM UP AS TWO, LITTLE HOLES BURNED INTO THE GUY'S LEATHER CLAD REAR END!
I SWEAR, SOMETIMES I WONDER HOW WE'VE MANAGED TO KEEP THIS RELATIONSHIP GOING FOR ELEVEN YEARS — WHAT KEEPS YOU FROM CHASING ANY CUTE ASS THAT COMES ALONG AND RATES THE KIND OF "NOTICE" MINE NO LONGER SEEMS TO!
AW GEEZ, LEONARD! EVEN IF THAT GUY WAS GAY —AND ESPECIALLY IF HE WAS—IN THIS DAY AND AGE, SOMEONE LIKE ME WOULD HAVE TO BE CRAZY TO FOOL AROUND WITH TOTAL STRANGERS LIKE I USED TO.
HOW CYNICAL! TO IMPLY THAT THE FEAR OF SOME DISEASE IS THE ONLY GLUE THAT EVER HELD US TOGETHER THIS LONG!
SO, WHY SHOULD WE BE ANY DIFFERENT THAN MOST OF THE COUPLES WE KNOW?... I MEAN, LET'S FACE IT, THIS SOCIETY WE LIVE IN DOESN'T EXACTLY HAVE LOTS OF SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR FOLKS LIKE US—EVEN FEWER ROLEMODELS. I DON'T RECALL, GROWING UP, WATCHING A GAY EQUIVALENT OF THE ADVENTURES OF OZZIE AND HARRIET, PREACHING THE VIRTUES OF LOYALTY AND MONOGAMY...
12:36
...I ADMIT IT. THERE WERE TIMES THAT THE FEAR OF A DISEASE MAY HAVE BEEN THE ONLY THING THAT MADE ME THINK TWICE, KEPT ME FROM GIVING UP ON US, KEPT ME HERE... BUT IT GAVE US TIME. TIME TO STOP AND THINK. TIME FOR ME TO GROW AND REALIZE THAT, FOR EACH TIME I THOUGHT WE COULDN'T GO ON, THERE WERE TEN OTHER TIMES THAT I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WOULD'VE DONE IF THE MAN I LOVE HADN'T BEEN THERE...
...SORRY ASS AND ALL.
IN THE MORNING, I'M GOING TO PUT EX-LAX IN YOUR COCOA PUFFS.
© TIM BAKER

WELL, DAVID, HERE WE ARE... YOUR MOM'S.
YUP.
I KNOW LEONARD AND I HAD A REALLY GREAT TIME; HOPE YOU DID, TOO.
YEAH, SURE.
DAVID, YOU KNOW, I DON'T GET TO SEE YOU ALL THAT OFTEN. IT WOULD BE NICE IF, ONCE IN A WHILE, WE COULD HAVE A REAL CONVERSATION, ONE WHERE YOU HAVE MORE TO SAY THAN JUST, "YUP, NOPE," AND "YEAH, SURE."
OK. ...LIKE WHAT?
WELL, LIKE, WHAT'S NEW AT SCHOOL, LIKE, WHAT YOU DO ON THE WEEKENDS I DON'T SEE YOU, WHAT YOU DO FOR FUN...
...NOW THAT YOUR BROTHER, RICHARD, HAS A CAR AND A GIRLFRIEND, I ONLY GET TO SEE HIM WHEN THE MOOD STRIKES. BUT WHEN IT DOES, ALL HE EVER TALKS ABOUT IS DEBBIE... HOW ABOUT YOU? ARE YOU SEEING ANYONE THESE DAYS?
JUST COLLIN.
COLLIN?... IS COLLIN ONE OF THOSE POPULAR, NEW GIRL'S NAMES THAT USED TO BE A MAN'S NAME? YOU KNOW, LIKE ASHLEY OR SASHA?
NOPE...
...DAD, I'M SORRY I DIDN'T TELL YOU SOONER OR HAVE A CHANCE TO PREPARE YOU FOR THIS, BUT—YES—COLLIN IS MY BOYFRIEND.
YOU SEE, I'VE BEEN CAREFUL TO DEAL CAUTIOUSLY WITH THE PROCESS OF COMING OUT. AFTER ALL, I DON'T WANT TO REPEAT YOUR MISTAKES AND END UP WITH A COUPLE OF KIDS AND A MESSY DIVORCE BEFORE I'M THIRTY...
...COLLIN AND I, BY THE WAY, ARE VERY CONCERNED WITH THE ISSUE OF PROMISCUITY VERSUS MONOGOMY IN CONTEMPORARY GAY RELATIONSHIPS. YOU SHOULD BE HAPPY TO KNOW THAT WE'VE BOTH DECIDED TO FOREGO CARNAL INTIMACY UNTIL SUCH A TIME AS WHEN WE DECIDE TO AFFIRM OUR COMMITMENT TO ONE ANOTHER OR THE NIGHT OF OUR JUNIOR PROM, WHICHEVER COMES FIRST.
WELL, DAD, I'VE GOT SCHOOL TOMORROW. I HAD A NICE TIME; THANKS. SEE YA, LEONARD.
I THINK YOU SHOULD DRIVE.
TIM BARELA '12

...OH, I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT I GOT MY NEW BOOTS SO QUICKLY! LARRY SAID THAT THE REST OF MY UNIFORM SHOULD COME IN IN A COUPLE OF WEEKS.
...I CAN'T WAIT! LARRY SAYS THAT THERE ARE CLUBS FOR PEOPLE INTO UNIFORMS. THEY ALL DRESS UP AND HAVE MEETINGS AND PARTIES AND...OH, DOESN'T IT SOUND LIKE FUN?
...OOO! I JUST LOVE THE LOOK AND FEEL AND SMELL OF NEW LEATHER!
I DON'T BELIEVE THIS! I WAS ORIGINALLY UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT I MARRIED A NICE, SIMPLE, CONSERVATIVE AEROSPACE ENGINEER IN BUTTONDOWN COLLARS AND SENSIBLE SHOES. NOW, SEVEN YEARS LATER, HE'S SUDDENLY DECIDED TO METAMORPHOSE INTO A...A FETISHIST!
THIS IS LARRY'S FAULT. WE'VE SPENT ENTIRELY TOO MUCH TIME WITH HIM AND LEONARD, LATELY. LARRY, HIS ECCENTRICITIES AND HIS KINKY LEATHER SHOP HAVE ALL FINALLY PROVEN TO BE A BAD INFLUENCE ON YOU, FRANKLIN.
OH, GET A GRIP, ROBERT! AFTER ALL, LARRY DIDN'T FORCE ME TO BUY THESE THINGS. I'VE DISCOVERED THAT THEY GENUINELY EXCITE ME—THEY TURN ME ON! ...YOU SHOULD BE HAPPY FOR ME. HAPPY THAT, AT OUR AGE, I CAN STILL BE ADVENTUROUS, TRY SOMETHING NEW...
"TRY SOMETHING NEW"? GETTING EXCITED AND TURNED ON? "AT OUR AGE"?!
I KNEW IT! I'M FORTY, I'M FAT, I'M TURNING GRAY AND I DON'T "EXCITE" YOU ANY MORE! I'VE BEEN REPLACED BY A COUPLE OF INANIMATE OBJECTS THAT WERE MADE FROM THE REAR END OF A DEAD COW!!
...MAYBE, TONIGHT, YOU SHOULD SNUGGLE-UP WITH YOUR NEW LOVES IN THE GUEST ROOM! MAYBE YOU CAN GET BOSSY TO MOO FOR YOU!!
OH, DON'T BE RIDICULOUS! YOU KNOW THAT I LOVE YOU, BOBBY BEAR. YOU KNOW THAT YOU STILL TURN ME ON.
PROVE IT!
WELL, OK...THAT IS, IF YOU LET ME PULL THESE BABIES ON AND YOU GET INTO YOUR CUTE DELINQUENT GANG MEMBER OUTFIT—YOU KNOW, THE DARK GLASSES AND THE BANDANA—AND YOU LET ME HANDCUFF YOU TO THE BED POST, LIKE LAST WEEK.
OH, HOW I WISH I HAD WATCHED PHIL DONAHUE THAT AFTERNOON HE TALKED ABOUT GAY MID LIFE CRISIS!
JIM

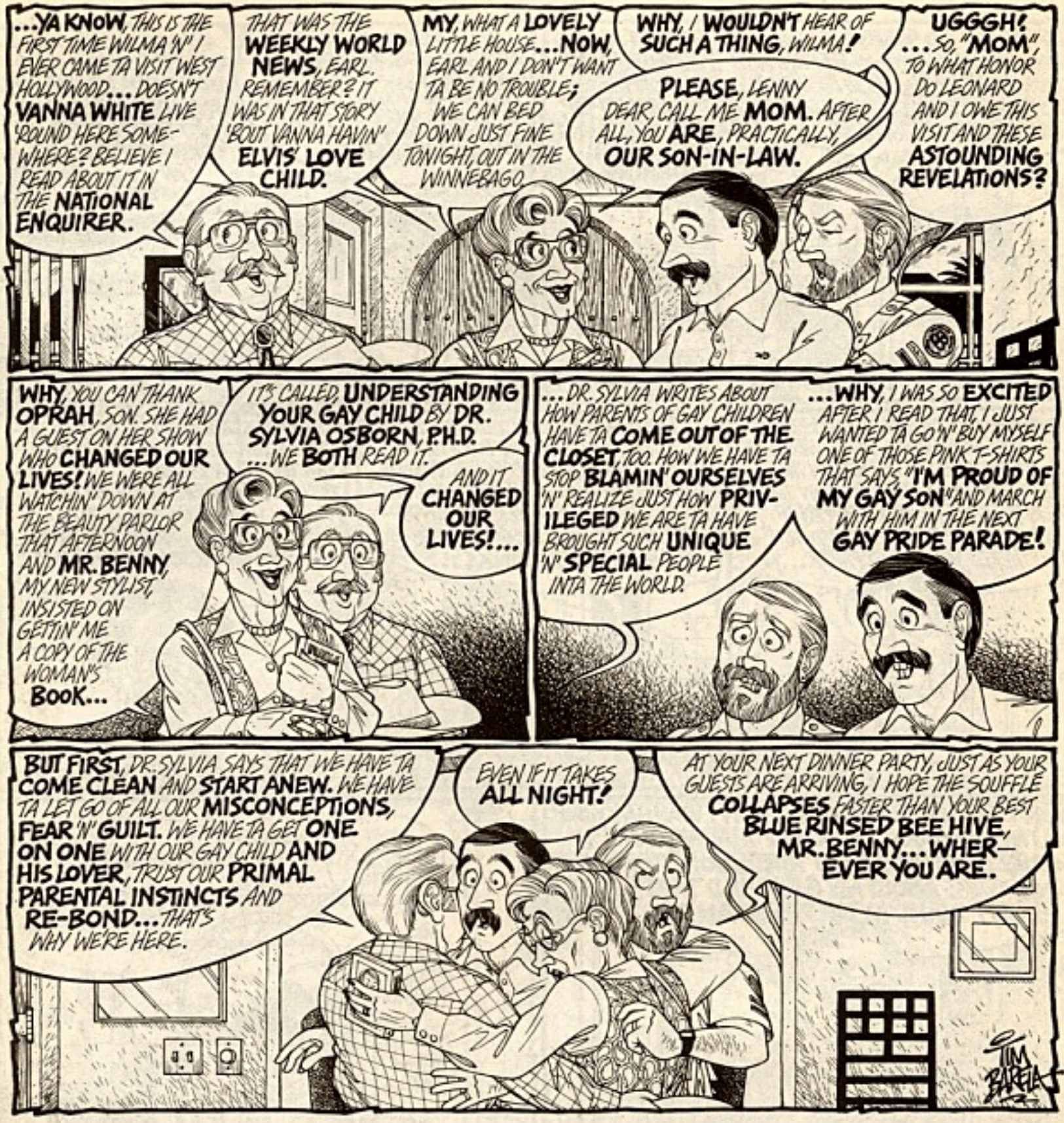

...DEBBIE, ARE YOU SURE? I MEAN REALLY, REALLY SURE ABOUT THIS?
OF COURSE I'M SURE! MY PERIOD IS MORE THAN TWO MONTHS LATE, THE LITTLE THING TURNED BLUE, AND, WORST OF ALL, I CAN'T ZIP UP MY WET SUIT ANY MORE!!
OH SHIT.
MY PARENTS JUST TOTALLY CAME UNGLUED WHEN I TOLD THEM. BUT, ONCE THEY'D CALMED DOWN, THEY STARTED TELLING ME ABOUT MY "OPTIONS!" THEY WANTED TO TAKE ME TO THE WOMEN'S CLINIC RIGHT THEN AND THERE!... BUT I COULDN'T DO IT. I WANT TO KEEP MY BABY, RICHIE. I WANT TO KEEP IT... NO MATTER WHAT...
...OH, RICHIE, WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?
WE'RE GOING TO DO THE RIGHT THING! WE'RE GOING TO STAY IN SCHOOL AND WE'RE BOTH GOING TO GRADUATE IN JUNE. IN THE MEAN TIME, I'LL GET ANOTHER PART-TIME JOB IF I HAVE TO. I'M GOING TO START SAVING AS MUCH MONEY AS I CAN BECAUSE, AFTER THE BABY COMES, WE'RE GETTING MARRIED... I LOVE YOU, DEBBIE!
WE'LL WORK IT ALL OUT. YOU'LL SEE, WE CAN MAKE IT!... MY PARENTS GOT MARRIED RIGHT AFTER THEY GOT OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL, YA KNOW. IF THEY COULD DO IT, SO CAN WE.
OH, RICHIE, I LOVE YOU, TOO!
TIM BARELA '92
WELL, MAYBE YOUR PARENTS WILL UNDERSTAND ABOUT US GETTING MARRIED, BUT HOW ARE YOU GOING TO TELL THEM ABOUT THE BABY?
AW, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT; I CAN HANDLE MY MOM. AND MY DAD, HE'LL BE REAL COOL ABOUT THE WHOLE THING...
WHAT?!! YOU'RE MAKING ME A GRANDFATHER?! I'M NOT EVEN FORTY YEARS OLD, YET!! COULDN'T YOU HAVE WAITED A COUPLE OF YEARS BEFORE RUINING MY LIFE?!!

SOMETIMES I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND YOU, LARRY. YOU HAVE TWO GREAT KIDS. ONE WHO WAS HONEST ENOUGH TO LET YOU KNOW ABOUT HIS COMING OUT, THE OTHER, HONEST ENOUGH TO TELL YOU ABOUT HIS IMPENDING PATERNITY. AND BOTH OF THEM MAN ENOUGH TO DEAL WITH HIS RESPECTIVE SITUATION RESPONSIBLY. YOU SHOULD BE PROUD!
I SHOULD KICK MYSELF FOR GIVING RICHARD A USED CAR LAST CHRISTMAS INSTEAD OF A YEAR'S SUPPLY OF CONDOMS!
...I'M TOO YOUNG TO BE A GRANDFATHER! ALL MY LIFE, EVER SINCE I SAW MY FIRST "DICK AND JANE" READER IN THE FIRST GRADE, GRANDFATHERS, IN MY MIND, HAVE ALWAYS BEEN WRINKLED, WHITE HAIRED, FEEBLE OLD MEN WHO LIVE ON FARMS OR IN RETIREMENT HOMES AND DO OLD FOLKS THINGS LIKE...OH, I DON'T KNOW, LIKE LISTEN TO PERRY COMO ALBUMS ON EIGHT TRACK TAPE DECKS.
WELL, YOU MAY NOT LOOK LIKE DICK AND JANE'S GRANDFATHER, BUT SOMETIMES, WHEN YOU BAKE COOKIES, YOU CAN PASS FOR THEIR GRANDMOTHER, NO PROBLEM.
DON'T HELP ME, LEONARD!
LARRY, LOTS OF PEOPLE YOUR AGE —AND YOUNGER— ARE GRANDPARENTS... JUST WAIT TILL THE BABY COMES; YOU'RE GOING TO LOVE IT... PLAYING THE TYPICAL, DOTING GRANDFATHER, SPOILING IT WITH GIFTS, SHOWING IT OFF TO THE NEIGHBORS WHEN YOU BABYSIT...
BABY-SIT?
YES, DIAPERS AND ALL... DON'T WORRY, HAVING A GRANDCHILD IS GOING TO BRING OUT A NURTURING, ALMOST MOTHER-LIKE SIDE OF YOUR PERSONALITY THAT YOU DIDN'T KNOW WAS THERE. AFTER ALL, WE MEN HAVE NIPPLES, TOO.
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOUR'S, LEONARD, BUT MINE DON'T WORK!
...BESIDES, I'D NEVER BE ABLE TO BABYSIT, NOT WITH MY BUSINESS TO RUN.
SO? IF YOU HAD TO, YOU COULD TAKE IT TO WORK WITH YOU.
HEY, WHAT IS THIS? A LEATHER SHOP OR A DAY-CARE CENTER?
TIM BARELA
WELL, IF DAVID AND RICHARD'S MATURITY IS THE RESULT OF INHERITANCE, IT'S OBVIOUS THAT YOUR END OF THE GENE POOL HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT.

JIM, ARE YOU SURE YOU DON'T MIND CLOSING UP FOR ME TONIGHT?
OF COURSE NOT. NO ONE CAN HELP THE FACT THAT STAN HAS THE FLU OR THAT LEONARD AND YOU HAVE OUT-OF-TOWN GUESTS—SOMEONE HAS TO CLOSE.
BUT THIS IS SATURDAY NIGHT. I FEEL GUILTY ABOUT YOU HAVING TO FILL IN FOR ME AT THE LAST MINUTE, SCREWING UP YOUR PLANS FOR THE EVENING.
LARRY'S LEATHER
WELL, I DID HAVE A PARTICULARLY STEAMY MÉNAGE À TROIS TO LOOK FORWARD TO: ME, AL PARKER ON TAPE AND A JAR OF GREASY KID STUFF... BUT THEN, THEY WON'T BE ANGRY IF I'M FASHIONABLY LATE.
I DON'T BELIEVE THAT! A GOOD LOOKING, AVAILIBLE GUY LIKE YOU, FOOTLOOSE IN A BIG CITY JUST CRAWLING WITH HUNKY, HOT, HORNY MEN TO CHOOSE FROM?
MY, YOU HAVE BEEN MARRIED A LONG TIME.
...BOSS, I GAVE UP WAITING FOR MY KNIGHT IN SHINING LEATHER TO COME ALONG YEARS AGO.
YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE SINGLE THESE DAYS, NOW THAT ALL THE GOOD MEN ARE LOCKED UP IN RELATIONSHIPS AND NOT RECYCLED AFTER EACH FAILED ATTEMPT AT DOMESTIC BLISS LIKE THEY USED TO...
...IF YOU DON'T HAVE FRIENDS TO MEET UP WITH, ALL THE USUAL GATHERING SPOTS CAN BE DEPRESSING VENUES, ANY MORE. YOU JOIN THE RANKS OF THE LOVELORN AND DESPERATE, STAND AROUND IN THE DARK, GAGGING ON CIGARETTE SMOKE AND THE SMELL OF STALE BEER, AND PICK THRU THE LEFTOVERS.
AW, COM'ON! YOU CAN STILL MEET DECENT MEN AT PLACES LIKE THAT. WHAT ABOUT THAT LAST GUY YOU WERE DATING, —WHAT WAS HIS NAME?—NIEL?
ARE YOU KIDDING?! "BAD NEWS" NIEL? CASE IN POINT: THAT MAN IS AN OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE, ANAL RETENTIVE NUTCASE, A REAL LIFE FATAL ATTRACTION! AFTER I BROKE UP WITH HIM, NIEL ACTUALLY GOT INTO MY APARTMENT SOMEHOW AND BOILED MY BUNNY!
HOLY—! I THOUGHT YOU JUST HAD A CAT! MY GOD, DID YOU CALL THE POLICE?!
IT WAS A TOY. AN OLD FLAME GAVE IT TO ME YEARS AGO, AFTER WE SAW TORCH SONG TRILOGY ON STAGE.
OH... WELL, I GUESS THAT'S NOT SO BAD.
YES IT WAS! THAT WAS MY BEST POT. I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO COOK PASTA IN IT EVER AGAIN!
JIM BALENA

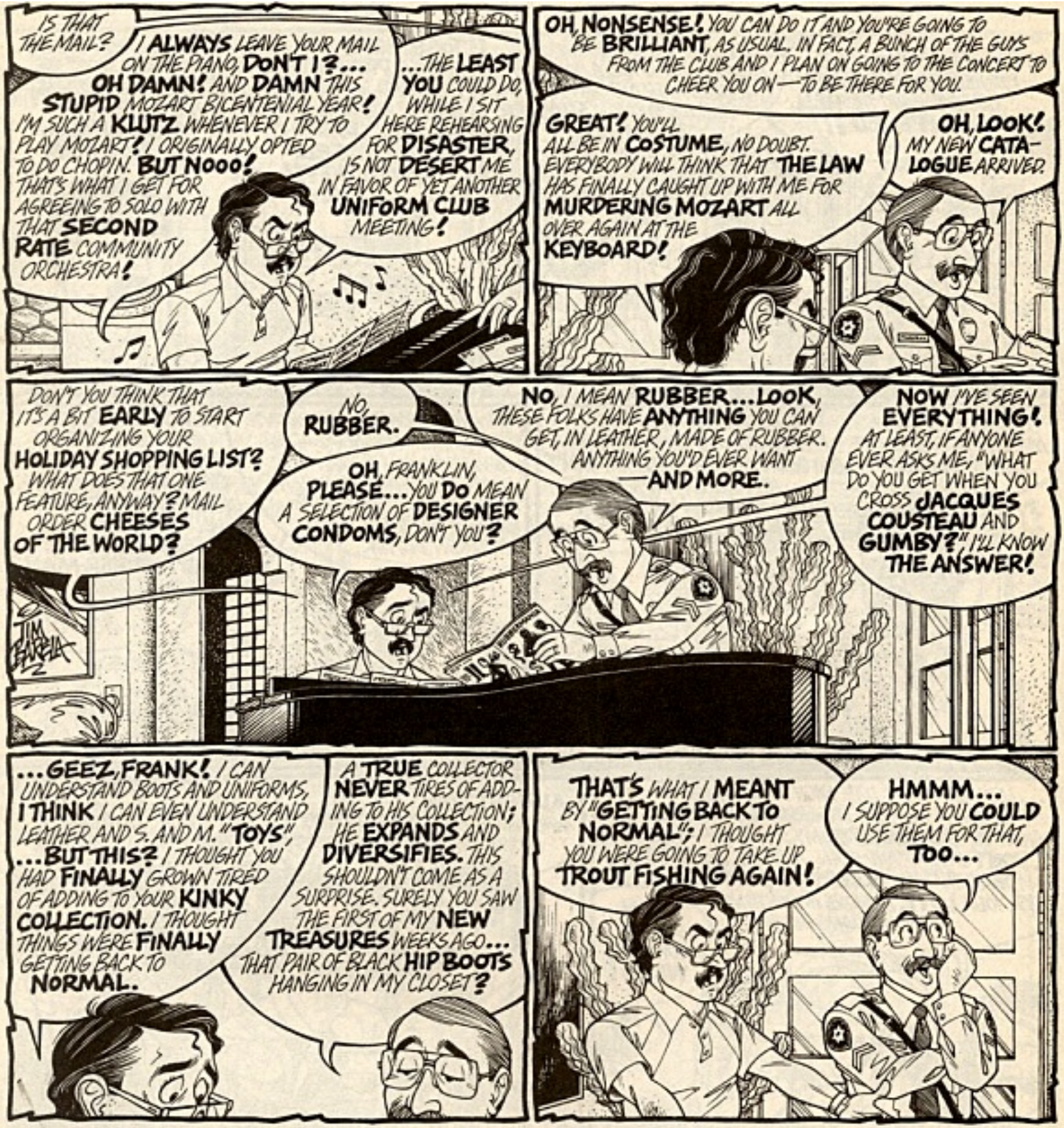
...AND REMEMBER THIS CHEST? BEFORE FRANK'S RECENT PLUNGE INTO UNIFORMS AND LEATHER, THIS IS WHERE WE KEPT ALL OUR BLANKETS— FRANK'S GRANDMOTHER'S QUILT, AS WELL, FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE! NOW LOOK.
MY, SOMEONE'S BEEN A BUSY LITTLE SHOPPER.
INDEED. IT LOOKS LIKE AN ENTIRE DAIRY FARM GOT KINKY AND DIED AT THE FOOT OF OUR BED!
AH, THE LEATHER FETISHIST'S ANSWER TO THE CROSS YOUR HEART BRA. NO COLLECTION WOULD BE COMPLETE WITHOUT ONE.
OF COURSE. FRANK SIMPLY HAD TO HAVE ONE AS WELL. UNFORTUNATELY, IT DIDN'T LIFT AND SEPARATE QUITE THE WAY HE EXPECTED. NO MATTER HOW HE ADJUSTED THE THING, FRANK JUST WASN'T HAPPY WITH THE WAY HE LOOKED IN IT... YOU'LL NEVER GUESS WHAT HE HAD TO HAVE NEXT...
WHAT?
WHAT?!
MALE BREAST IMPLANTS. IT'S ABSOLUTELY THE LATEST PROCEDURE— I SAW IT ON DONAHUE.
FRANK, HAVE YOU LOST YOUR MIND? ALL FOR THE SAKE OF VANITY, YOU LET SOME CRAZY PLASTIC SURGEON STICK A COUPLE OF ZIP LOCK BAGGIES FULL OF SILLY PUTTY IN YOUR CHEST?!
OH, LARRY, GET WITH IT! THEY'RE NOT SOFT AND MUSHY LIKE FEMALE BREAST IMPLANTS. HERE, SEE FOR YOURSELF...
...FEEL HOW HARD AND MASCULINE, YET CONVINCINGLY NATURAL THEY ARE.
GEEZ— FER CHIS'SAKE, FRANK!!
...SO, THERE FRANK WAS, ALL DECKED OUT IN LEATHER WITH NOTHING UNDER HIS JACKET BUT THAT HARNESS, PROUD AS A PEACOCK WITH HIS NEW TITS. HE INSISTED THAT I BE APPROPRIATELY ATTIRED FOR THEIR DEBUT, AS WELL... IN THIS.
NOW, LORD KNOWS, I'VE MADE EVERY EFFORT TO ACCOMMODATE FRANK AND ALL THESE NEW HOBBIES AND BIZARRE INTERESTS OF HIS. I TOLD MYSELF THAT, BACK IN THE SEVENTIES, DOG COLLARS WERE CONSIDERED A FASHION STATEMENT...
TIM BARELA '92
...SO, I DID IT. I WORE IT AND ALLOWED FRANK TO LEAD ME AROUND THAT BAR ALL EVENING AT THE END OF A CHAIN!
...HOWEVER, I ABSOLUTELY, UNEQUIVOCALLY DREW THE LINE AT THE LITTLE TAG SHAPED LIKE A BONE.
AWWW, IT SAYS "BOBBY" IN SCRIPT.

YOU DID WHAT?!
I SAID I INVITED THEM TO COME OVER.
MY GOD, LEONARD, HOW COULD YOU DO SUCH A THING? HOW COULD YOU ASK THOSE PEOPLE TO COME HERE, TO ACTUALLY ALLOW THEM INTO OUR HOME?!
EASY. AFTER ALL, THEY ARE YOUR PARENTS... WHAT COULD I DO? YOU WERE AT WORK WHEN YOUR MOTHER CALLED. SHE SAID THAT THEY WERE IN ORANGE COUNTY VISITING THEIR GRANDCHILDREN. THEY FOUND OUT ABOUT RICHARD AND DEBBIE BEING "IN A FAMILY WAY." THEN SHE STARTED SPOUTING THIS WEIRD PSYCHOBABBLE ABOUT "ENLIGHTENED SENSITIVITY" AND "POSITIVE SUPPORT MECHANISMS"...
GOOD LORD! WHAT HAS THAT WOMAN BEEN READING NOW?
...SHE ASKED HOW YOU WERE AND SAID IT WOULD BE NICE IF THEY COULD SEE YOU, AS WELL. SO, I INVITED THEM TO DINNER AND INSISTED THAT THEY SPEND THE NIGHT AND DRIVE BACK TO ARIZONA IN THE MORNING.
UGGGH!
LARRY, YOU'VE GOTTEN TO KNOW EVERY MEMBER OF MY IMMEDIATE FAMILY. YET, IN ALL THESE YEARS, I ONLY GOT TO MEET YOUR PARENTS, BRIEFLY, THAT ONE TIME WE STOPPED TO VISIT ON THE WAY BACK FROM SANTA FE WITH BOB AND FRANK... I SWEAR, SOMETIMES I THINK YOU'RE ASHAMED OF THEM.
I AM NOT ASHAMED OF MY PARENTS! BUT, GEEZ, LEONARD, WE ARE TALKING ABOUT WILMA AND EARL EVANS OF FOURTEEN PICCADILLY CIRCLE, THE LONDON BRIDGE MOBILE HOME PARK, LAKE HAVASU CITY, ARIZONA.
...MY FATHER, WHO SPENDS HIS RETIREMENT WATCHING THE HOME SHOPPING NETWORK AND WHEEL OF FORTUNE. MY MOTHER, WHO OWNS THE PRINCESS DYE BEAUTY SALON AND COLLECTS PRINTS OF CUTE, CONSTIPATED CHILDREN SITTING ON CHAMBER POTS FOR HER BATHROOM. THIS IS THE FUN COUPLE THAT YOU INVITED FOR AN INTIMATE EVENING OF WITTY REPARTEE, WHITE WINE AND LAUGHS WITH THEIR GAY SON AND HIS LOVER HERE IN, DOWN-HOME, WEST HOLLYWOOD!!
...OH GOD, WHAT DID I DO TO DESERVE SUCH A FATE? MY LIFE, ALL AROUND ME, IS TURNING INTO A GRADE B, DISASTER/HORROR MOVIE; SCREENPLAY BY STEPHEN KING, DIRECTED BY SAM PECKINPAH!
...I CAN SEE THE FLASHING LIGHTS OF THE CINEMA MARQUEE... "NOW PLAYING... NIGHTMARE ON RANGELY AVENUE," SUBTITLED, "MA AND PA KETTLE GO TO BOY'S TOWN."
TIM BARELA 2
THAT'S THE BIGGEST WINNEBAGO I'VE EVER SEEN!
THEY'RE HEEEEERE!


...YA KNOW, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME WILMA 'N' I EVER CAME TA VISIT WEST HOLLYWOOD... DOESN'T VANNA WHITE LIVE 'ROUND HERE SOMEWHERE? BELIEVE I READ ABOUT IT IN THE NATIONAL ENQUIRER.
THAT WAS THE WEEKLY WORLD NEWS, EARL. REMEMBER? IT WAS IN THAT STORY 'BOUT VANNA HAVIN' ELVIS' LOVE CHILD.
MY, WHAT A LOVELY LITTLE HOUSE... NOW, EARL AND I DON'T WANT TA BE NO TROUBLE; WE CAN BED DOWN JUST FINE TONIGHT, OUT IN THE WINNEBAGO.
WHY, I WOULDN'T HEAR OF SUCH A THING, WILMA!
PLEASE, LENNY DEAR, CALL ME MOM. AFTER ALL, YOU ARE, PRACTICALLY, OUR SON-IN-LAW.
UGGGH! ...SO, "MOM", TO WHAT HONOR DO LEONARD AND I OWE THIS VISIT AND THESE ASTOUNDING REVELATIONS?
WHY, YOU CAN THANK OPRAH, SON. SHE HAD A GUEST ON HER SHOW WHO CHANGED OUR LIVES! WE WERE ALL WATCHIN' DOWN AT THE BEAUTY PARLOR THAT AFTERNOON AND MR. BENNY, MY NEW STYLIST, INSISTED ON GETTIN' ME A COPY OF THE WOMAN'S BOOK...
IT'S CALLED, UNDERSTANDING YOUR GAY CHILD BY DR. SYLVIA OSBORN, P.H.D. ...WE BOTH READ IT.
AND IT CHANGED OUR LIVES!...
...DR. SYLVIA WRITES ABOUT HOW PARENTS OF GAY CHILDREN HAVE TA COME OUT OF THE CLOSET, TOO. HOW WE HAVE TA STOP BLAMIN' OURSELVES 'N' REALIZE JUST HOW PRIVILEGED WE ARE TA HAVE BROUGHT SUCH UNIQUE 'N' SPECIAL PEOPLE INTA THE WORLD.
...WHY, I WAS SO EXCITED AFTER I READ THAT, I JUST WANTED TA GO 'N' BUY MYSELF ONE OF THOSE PINK T-SHIRTS THAT SAYS, "I'M PROUD OF MY GAY SON" AND MARCH WITH HIM IN THE NEXT GAY PRIDE PARADE!
BUT FIRST, DR. SYLVIA SAYS THAT WE HAVE TA COME CLEAN AND START ANEW. WE HAVE TA LET GO OF ALL OUR MISCONCEPTIONS, FEAR 'N' GUILT. WE HAVE TA GET ONE ON ONE WITH OUR GAY CHILD AND HIS LOVER, TRUST OUR PRIMAL PARENTAL INSTINCTS AND RE-BOND... THAT'S WHY WE'RE HERE.
EVEN IF IT TAKES ALL NIGHT!
AT YOUR NEXT DINNER PARTY, JUST AS YOUR GUESTS ARE ARRIVING, I HOPE THE SOUFFLE COLLAPSES FASTER THAN YOUR BEST BLUE RINSED BEE HIVE, MR. BENNY... WHEREVER YOU ARE.
TIM BARELA '92

LARRY, I AM SO SORRY! IF I HAD KNOWN THAT SPENDING AN EVENING WITH YOUR PARENTS WAS GOING TO BE SUCH A TRYING EXPERIENCE, I WOULD HAVE NEVER INVITED THEM TO...
FORGET ABOUT IT; WE SURVIVED. AND NOW THEY'RE BOTH LOCKED-UP, SAFELY IN THE GUEST ROOM... UNTIL MORNING.
...IN THE MEANTIME, THE TWO OF US ARE HERE, TOGETHER, STANDING UNDER A SOOTHING, HOT SHOWER... I'M MASSAGING YOUR SHOULDERS... RELIEVING YOUR TENSION...
AND NEITHER DR. SYLVIA AND HER SILLY MANIFESTO ABOUT UNDERSTANDING GAY CHILDEREN NOR HER LATEST FIERY EYED CONVERTS—MY PARENTS—CAN SPOIL... THIS... MOMENT...
YOO-HOO, COMIN' THRU-OO! IT'S JUST ME, LARRY DEAR. WE WERE ALL OUT OF TOILET PAPER IN THE OTHER BATHROOM. NOW, YA KNOW THAT THERE'S GONNA BE HELLTA PAY IF YER FATHER GETS UP NEXT MORNIN' AND THERE'S NO TOILET PAPER...
I FOUND IT! SO, I'LL JUST GET BACK OUT OF YER WAY, NOW. AND DON'T WORRY, I DIDN'T PEEK, I DIDN'T SEE A THING. EVEN IF I DID, THOUGH, YOU MAY BE THIRTY EIGHT YEARS OLD, BUT YER STILL MY LITTLE BOY. WHY, I USED TA BATHE YOU IN THE KITCHEN SINK!...
OH MY—LEONARD! OH DEAR, I'M SORRY, LEONARD! I THOUGHT... LARRY! YER BOTH IN THERE. YER BOTH IN THERE TAKIN' A SHOWER... TOGETHER. ...NOW, WHY WOULD YOU BOTH... BE TAKIN' A... TOGETHER...? OH MY GRACIOUS HEAVEN!?
DON'T BOTHER ANSWERIN'; I DON'T WANNA KNOW! OH, I'M SO SORRY! I'M SORRY THAT WE CAME 'N' SORRY THAT I EVER READ THAT BOOK! THERE ARE SOME THINGS ABOUT MY GAY CHILD THAT I JUST DON'T WANT TA UNDERSTAND!!
JIM BALENA
OH SHIT.
UGGGGGH!

YER MOTHER'S OUT IN THE KITCHEN, SON; SHE'S VERY UPSET. WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED?!
OH, SHE CAME INTO THE BATHROOM LOOKING FOR A ROLL OF TOILET PAPER AND SAW LEONARD AND ME TAKING A SHOWER TOGETHER.
TOGETHER? WELL, I KNEW THAT THE DROUGHT HERE IN CALIFORNIA WAS PARTICULARLY BAD, BUT WHY WOULD YA HAVE TA...!!!...DAMN IT, BOY, DID SHE SEE ANYTHING?!!
DON'T WORRY, MR. EVANS, YOUR WIFE DIDN'T SEE ANYTHING—NOTHING WAS HAPPENING... ABSOLUTELY... NOTHING.
MOM, WHY ARE YOU MAKING HOT CHOCOLATE ...IN THE WOK?
WELL, YA KNOW THAT I ALWAYS HAVE TA GO 'N' COOK SOMETHIN' WHEN I'M UPSET. BUT THIS ISN'T MY KITCHEN AND I DON'T KNOW WHERE ANYTHING IS!
MILK
YA KNOW, MOM, YOU SHOULDN'T REGRET EVER HAVING READ DR. SYLVIA'S BOOK. I THINK IT'S WONDERFUL THAT ANY PARENT WOULD MAKE AN EFFORT TO UNDERSTAND THEIR ADULT CHILDREN BETTER.
...HOWEVER, COMING TO GRIPS WITH THE FACT THAT YOUR CHILD IS GAY MAY BE ONE THING IN THE ABSTRACT, BUT ACTUALLY SEEING YOUR GAY SON BEING INTIMATE WITH ANOTHER MAN ...WELL, THAT'S SOMETHING ELSE ENTIRELY.
...LEONARD AND I LOVE EACH OTHER. IT ISN'T IMPORTANT IF YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING ABOUT OUR RELATIONSHIP OR MY SEXUALITY—HECK, I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT ALL, MYSELF... WHAT DOES MATTER IS THAT YOU ACCEPT AND SUPPORT US. YOUR LOVE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANYTHING ELSE.
OH, SON, YOU KNOW THAT WE DO!
ALRIGHT NOW, WHO WANTS HOT CHOCOLATE?
IN BRANDY SNIFTERS?
THAT'S ALL I COULD FIND.
JUST DRINK IT, LEONARD.


IS THAT THE MAIL?
I ALWAYS LEAVE YOUR MAIL ON THE PIANO, DON'T I?... OH DAMN! AND DAMN THIS STUPID MOZART BICENTENIAL YEAR! I'M SUCH A KLUTZ WHENEVER I TRY TO PLAY MOZART! I ORIGINALLY OPTED TO DO CHOPIN. BUT Nooo! THAT'S WHAT I GET FOR AGREEING TO SOLO WITH THAT SECOND RATE COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA!
...THE LEAST YOU COULD DO, WHILE I SIT HERE REHEARSING FOR DISASTER, IS NOT DESERT ME IN FAVOR OF YET ANOTHER UNIFORM CLUB MEETING!
OH, NONSENSE! YOU CAN DO IT AND YOU'RE GOING TO BE BRILLIANT, AS USUAL. IN FACT, A BUNCH OF THE GUYS FROM THE CLUB AND I PLAN ON GOING TO THE CONCERT TO CHEER YOU ON—TO BE THERE FOR YOU.
GREAT! YOU'LL ALL BE IN COSTUME, NO DOUBT. EVERYBODY WILL THINK THAT THE LAW HAS FINALLY CAUGHT UP WITH ME FOR MURDERING MOZART ALL OVER AGAIN AT THE KEYBOARD!
OH, LOOK! MY NEW CATA-LOGUE ARRIVED.
DON'T YOU THINK THAT IT'S A BIT EARLY TO START ORGANIZING YOUR HOLIDAY SHOPPING LIST? WHAT DOES THAT ONE FEATURE, ANYWAY? MAIL ORDER CHEESES OF THE WORLD?
NO, RUBBER.
OH, FRANKLIN, PLEASE... YOU DO MEAN A SELECTION OF DESIGNER CONDOMS, DON'T YOU?
NO, I MEAN RUBBER... LOOK, THESE FOLKS HAVE ANYTHING YOU CAN GET, IN LEATHER, MADE OF RUBBER. ANYTHING YOU'D EVER WANT —AND MORE.
NOW I'VE SEEN EVERYTHING! AT LEAST, IF ANYONE EVER ASKS ME, "WHAT DO YOU GET WHEN YOU CROSS JACQUES COUSTEAU AND GUMBY?" I'LL KNOW THE ANSWER!
JIM FARLEY
...GEEZ, FRANK! I CAN UNDERSTAND BOOTS AND UNIFORMS, I THINK I CAN EVEN UNDERSTAND LEATHER AND S. AND M. "TOYS", ...BUT THIS? I THOUGHT YOU HAD FINALLY GROWN TIRED OF ADDING TO YOUR KINKY COLLECTION. I THOUGHT THINGS WERE FINALLY GETTING BACK TO NORMAL.
A TRUE COLLECTOR NEVER TIRES OF ADDING TO HIS COLLECTION; HE EXPANDS AND DIVERSIFIES. THIS SHOULDN'T COME AS A SURPRISE. SURELY YOU SAW THE FIRST OF MY NEW TREASURES WEEKS AGO... THAT PAIR OF BLACK HIP BOOTS HANGING IN MY CLOSET?
THAT'S WHAT I MEANT BY "GETTING BACK TO NORMAL"; I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO TAKE UP TROUT FISHING AGAIN!
HMMM... I SUPPOSE YOU COULD USE THEM FOR THAT, TOO...

HELLO IN THERE! LEN——ARD, GUESS WHO'S HE——RE!
OH, GOD, PLEASE, THIS WAS A NICE SATURDAY —SAY IT AIN'T SO!
LEONARD, MY BABY!
HI, MOM.
THE GIRLS AND I WERE HAVING LUNCH AT CANTER'S AFTER TEMPLE; I BROUGHT YOU A FEW THINGS FROM THEIR DELI.
MOM, LARRY IS SUPPOSED TO BE OUT IN THE DRIVEWAY WORKING ON HIS MOTORCYCLE AND PLAYING WATCH-DOG. HOW DID YOU GET PAST HIM?
I THREW HIM A BROWNIE. YOU KNOW THAT HE'LL ROLL OVER AND PLAY DEAD FOR ANYTHING CHOCOLATE.
THAT'S PLAYING DIRTY, MOM... MONDAY, HE GOES TO THE VET TO GET WORMED!
LOOK, CANTER'S HAD THE NICEST LOX...
...AND BAGELS—ONION, POPPY SEED AND PUMPERNICKEL, YOUR FAVORITE... WHAT'S THIS? WHY, IT'S A PHOTOGRAPH IN THE BAG WITH YOUR BAGELS! IT'S THE PHOTOGRAPH OF A SMALL CHILD.
GEE, I WONDER HOW THAT GOT IN THERE. MAYBE IT'S CANTER'S BAGEL POSTER CHILD FOR 1991.
TIM BARELA '92
NOW I REMEMBER. THIS IS A PHOTOGRAPH OF THAT NICE SYLVIA BLOOM'S TWO-YEAR-OLD. SILVIA IS THE HOSTESS AT CANTER'S... SHE USED TO BE SINGLE AND AVAILABLE. OH, WHENEVER I SEE A DEAR, SWEET BABY LIKE THIS, I'M REMINDED OF THE GRANDCHILD I'LL NEVER HAVE!
MOM, NORMAN AND BERNIE HAVE GIVEN YOU FIVE GRANDCHILDREN WHO, OVER THE YEARS, HAVE CONTINUALLY TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF YOU LIKE A GANG OF LITTLE EXTORTIONISTS. WHY WOULD YOU WANT ANOTHER?
SO THAT I COULD HAVE SOMEONE ELSE BESIDES YOU TO BREAK MY HEART, DEAR.

... AND OUR SCHOOL HAS THIS CLASS, SATURDAY MORNINGS, FOR EXPECTING TEEN MOTHERS AND FATHERS. DEBBIE AND I HAVE BEEN DOING A LOT OF LAMAZE EXERCISES THESE LAST FEW WEEKS.
THIS CAN'T BE THE SAME ORANGE COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM THAT I CAME TO KNOW AND LOATHE.
HAVE SOME MORE LOX, DEBBIE.
I REALLY LIKE THE CLASS, ESPECIALLY THE LAMAZE STUFF. THE TEACHER TREATS US LIKE A REAL COUPLE AND WE GET TO BE TOGETHER, PREPARING FOR THE BIRTH OF OUR BABY AND OUR FUTURE... OH WOW, THE BABY'S ACTING UP AGAIN! THIS IS SO EXCELLENT; IT'S BETTER THAN RENTING ALIEN! DAD, REACH OVER AND CHECK IT OUT!
GET YOUR GRUBBY, FUCKING HANDS OFF OF ME — EVERYBODY!! I AM FED UP WITH PEOPLE TOUCHING ME AND RUBBING MY TUMMY LIKE IT WAS SOME KIND OF GIANT EASTER EGG OR I WAS SOME MAGIC BUDDHA OR SOMETHING — I'VE HAD IT! NOW, GET OUT OF MY WAY, I'M GOING TO BE SICK AGAIN!
GOOD GRIEF! IS THAT WHAT I HAVE TO LOOK FORWARD TO FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE? I MEAN, YOU'VE BEEN MARRIED, DAD; IS THAT WHAT IT'S LIKE? YOU THINK YOU KNOW THE PERSON YOU LOVE. THEN, WITHOUT WARNING, BECAUSE OF SOME SILLY LITTLE THING YOU DID OR SOME STUPID HORMONE YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT, THEY TURN INTO A RAVING, IRRATIONAL LUNATIC...?
TIM BARELA '12
WELL, RICHARD, SPEAKING FROM EXPERIENCE, YES, I'M AFRAID SO.
AND, SPEAKING FROM EXPERIENCE, I CONCUR.
WHO ASKED YOU?

AW, DAD!
I'M SERIOUS, DAVID. I AM NOT GOING TO LET YOU GO TO THE PARADE DRESSED LIKE THAT! OF ALL DAYS TO WEAR TIGHT, FADED JEANS; WHY COULDN'T YOU WEAR SOMETHING BAGGY, LOUD AND UGLY, LIKE ALL THE OTHER KIDS YOUR AGE?
MR. EVANS, IT'S NO BIG DEAL.
YOU'VE NEVER BEEN TO ANYTHING LIKE THIS BEFORE, COLLIN. BUT DAVID HAS AND HE SHOULD KNOW BETTER THAN TO WEAR TIGHT PANTS ANYWHERE HE KNOWS THAT HUNDREDS AND HUNDREDS OF BUG-EYED, HORNY HOMOS WILL BE GATHERING IN A STATE OF TRIBAL AND HORMONAL FRENZY!
LISTEN TO YOUR FATHER, HE KNOWS WHAT HE'S TALKING ABOUT... AFTER ALL, THAT IS HOW I MET HIM.
DON'T HELP ME, LEONARD!
DAD, THIS ISN'T ABOUT MY PANTS, IS IT? YOU'VE BEEN UP-TIGHT ABOUT SOMETHING ALL WEEKEND... YES, I HAVE BEEN TO THE GAY PRIDE PARADE AND FAIR WITH YOU AND LEONARD BEFORE. BUT THIS TIME IT'S DIFFERENT. IT'S DIFFERENT THIS TIME BECAUSE MY BOYFRIEND IS WITH ME, BECAUSE I'M COMING OUT AS A GAY PERSON AND THIS DAY, IN ESSENCE, IS MY FIRST MAJOR RITE OF PASSAGE.
OH, DAVID...
...YOU'RE JUST FIFTEEN YEARS OLD! I REMEMBER HOW HARD IT WAS TO BE IN HIGH SCHOOL, TO BE FIFTEEN AND GAY, AND HOW MUCH MORE DIFFICULT THINGS GOT AS I GREW OLDER. KNOWING ALL THAT, I CAN'T HELP ASKING MYSELF IF ENCOURAGING YOU AND COLLIN REALLY IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO... TODAY, IT'LL BE EASY TO TAKE A STAND ABOUT WHO YOU ARE. THERE'S GOING TO BE THOUSANDS OF US THERE, IT'LL BE POSITIVE AND YOU'LL HAVE FUN... BUT, A TIME MAY COME, SOMEDAY, WHEN YOU'LL HAVE TO TAKE A STAND... AND IT WON'T BE A PICNIC.
I KNOW THAT, DAD...
...YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN HONEST WITH ME AND I DON'T HAVE ANY ILLUSIONS ABOUT WHAT I'M DOING OR WHAT I'M GETTING MYSELF INTO. BUT I'LL CROSS THAT BRIDGE WHEN I GET TO IT. RIGHT NOW I JUST WANT TO TAKE MY BOYFRIEND'S HAND, WALK DOWN TO SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD AND HAVE FUN.
AND, IF ANYONE LOOKS AT HIS PANTS, I'LL JUST SMILE PROUDLY AND SAY, SORRY, BUT HE'S WITH ME.
I VAGUELY REMEMBER WHAT IT'S LIKE TO HAVE SOMEONE WITH A SILLY GRIN HOLDING MY HAND IN PUBLIC. ...DO YOU?
DON'T START IN ON ME TODAY, LEONARD, OR YOU'LL BE LUCKY IF ANYTHING ELSE BESIDES YOUR HAND GETS HELD AGAIN FOR A VERY LONG TIME!
I HAVE NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT THAT, EITHER.
TIM BARELA

...I ADMIT, I DID HAVE MY MISGIVINGS WHEN WE FIRST FOUND OUT THAT OUR DEBBIE WAS EXPECTING. BUT NOW I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO BEING A GRAN'MA AND THE LITTLE WEDDING THAT WE'RE PLANNING FOR THE KIDS THIS AUTUMN...I NEVER EXPECTED THAT ONE OF MY NEW IN-LAWS WOULD BE A HOMOSEXUAL PERSON, THOUGH.
IMAGINE HOW I FELT WHEN I FOUND OUT...AFTER ALL, I WAS MARRIED TO HIM AT THE TIME.
OH, BUT I JUST KNOW THAT WE'RE ALL GOING TO BE GREAT FRIENDS...
...LARRY AND MY PHIL ARE SURE TO BE REAL PALS!
SO...YOU'RE THE QUEER FATHER OF THE HORNY LITTLE DELINQUENT WHO KNOCKED-UP MY PRECIOUS GIRL.
AND YOU'RE THE LAX PARENTAL ROLEMODEL WHO'S NYMPHO-MANIAC OFFSPRING COULDN'T WAIT TO SEDUCE MY LITTLE BOY, TO GET HIM ALONE AND...
LARRY!
...AND AS WE GO FORTH INTO THE WORLD, WE, THE ANAHEIM HIGH CLASS OF 1991, HAVE A DREAM THIS GRADUATION DAY...THAT ALL OF HUMANITY'S CHILDREN, AMERICANS AND RUSSIANS, IRAQIS AND KUWAITIS...
I'M TELLING YOU, RICHIE, IT'S STARTING—I'M SURE OF IT!...AND THE CONTRACTIONS ARE JUST FIVE MINUTES APART!!
BUT THE BABY ISN'T DUE FOR ANOTHER COUPLE OF WEEKS, YET! IT CAN'T COME NOW, WE'RE ABOUT TO GRADUATE! AND OUR PARENTS ARE GOING TO HAVE A BIG PARTY FOR US LATER. WE JUST CAN'T...
...BUT, IF NOT US, THEN WHO? AND, IF NOT NOW, THEN WHEN? AND WE SHOULD NOT ASK WHAT OUR COUNTRY CAN DO FOR US, RATHER, WE SHOULD ASK WHAT WE CAN DO FOR IT...AND, ON THAT DAY, OUR GREAT COUNTRY WILL TELL US...
I SAID I'M IN LABOR, YOU ASSHOLE! GET ME THE HELL OUTTA HERE!!
JIM PANZA
OH, SHE TAKES AFTER HER MOTHER; HOW SPECIAL! ALL MY BABIES CAME EARLY, FAST AND FURIOUS, TOO... PUT A FRESH TAPE IN THE CAMCORDER, DEAR.
I JUST DID, DEAR, AND I'M DIALING THE OBSTETRICIAN AS WE SPEAK.

THIS CAN'T BE RIGHT. THIS ISN'T DEBBIE'S PRIVATE ROOM, THIS IS A DELIVERY ROOM.
IT WOULD BE JUST LIKE YOU TO SCREW-UP DIRECTIONS, LARRY. WE WERE MARRIED FOR ALL OF EIGHT YEARS AND NEVER ONCE DID YOU...
MOM! WHERE DID YOU...? HOW DID YOU...?
NEVER MIND THAT. THIS IS THE CLOSEST I'LL EVER COME TO YOU GIVING ME A GRANDCHILD AND I'M NOT MISSING IT FOR THE WORLD!
DAD! LEONARD, MOM! ...MRS. GOLDMAN?
HMMM... UNWED TEEN FATHER, UNWED TEEN FATHER'S GAY FATHER, UNWED TEEN FATHER'S MOTHER-GAY FATHER'S EX-WIFE, GAY FATHER'S LOVER AND GAY FATHER'S LOVER'S MOTHER... MY, ISN'T THIS COZY.
AND WHO ARE YOU, THE BOUNCER?
THIS IS NURSE MIKE, DAD. MIKE IS OUR DELIVERY ROOM ASSISTANT.
"NURSE" MIKE? SWALLOWING THAT ONE WOULD REQUIRE A LEAP OF IMAGINATION AND FAITH ROUGHLY EQUIVALENT TO A LURCH INTO THE NEXT DIMENSION.
RICHARD, WHAT'S HAPPENED? IS DEBBIE ALL RIGHT, HAS SHE HAD THE BABY YET?
SIR, SURELY, EVEN SOMEONE OF YOUR PERSUASION UNDERSTANDS THAT THESE DELICATE ISSUES OF HETERO-SEXUAL REPRODUCTION TAKE TIME. AFTER ALL, THIS IS A HOSPITAL, NOT A FAST FOOD RESTAURANT; WE DELIVER BABIES HERE, NOT INFANT McNUGGETS.
THAT'S RIGHT. SO, COME ON EVERY-BODY, WE'LL JUST FIND DEBBIE'S PARENTS AND THE WAITING ROOM AND LET NATURE TAKE IT'S COURSE.
BUT DAD, DEBBIE'S PARENTS ARE WITH HER, HERE, IN THE DELIVERY ROOM. YA SEE, THESE DAYS, SOME OF THE MORE PROGRESSIVE HOSPITALS INVITE RELATIVES INTO THE DELIVERY ROOM TO SHARE THE BIRTH EXPERIENCE —WE'RE IN LUCK!
WE ARE?
TIM BARELA '92
UNFORTUNATELY, IMMEDIATE FAMILY ONLY. BUT, PLEASE, EVERYONE ELSE, DO JOIN US... IT WILL, SIMPLY, MAKE MY DAY.
C'MON, DAD, I WANT YOU TO HELP ME CUT THE CORD.

BOSS, WHAT ARE YOU DOING SITTING OUT HERE?
OH, I JUST THOUGHT I'D STOP BY AND CHECK UP ON THINGS, MAKE SURE THAT YOU'D CLOSED AND LOCKED EVERYTHING DOWN NICE AND TIGHT. A MAN SHOULD NEVER LEAVE THE LEAST THINGS HE STILL HAS CONTROL OVER TO CHANCE WHILE EVERYTHING ELSE IN HIS LIFE IS SLIPPING FROM HIS GRASP AND TURNING TO SHIT.
LEATHER
UH-OH, YOU AND LEONARD HAD A BIG FIGHT AT RICHARD'S GRADUATION PARTY.
IF ONLY THE ISSUES OF LIFE COULD ALWAYS BE THAT UNCOMPLICATED. BUT NO, REAL LIFE, LIKE TIME, MARCHES ON, LEAVING YOUR FADED YOUTH IN THE DUST, DRAGGING YOU WITH IT TOWARDS THE INEVITABLE— OLD AGE—A FUTURE OF SWILLING GERITOL, CLIPPING DENTU CREAM COUPONS, TRADING IN MY LEATHER JOCKSTRAP FOR A BOX OF DEPENDS... BABYSITTING MY GRANDCHILDREN...
DON'T TELL ME; DEBBIE HAD THE BABY.
JUST CALL ME "GRAMPS"! I DIDN'T STICK AROUND FOR THE BLESSED EVENT ITSELF, THOUGH. TALK ABOUT ADDING INSULT TO INJURY, THEY ACTUALLY WANTED ME TO WATCH! RICHARD ACTUALLY ASKED ME TO HELP HIM CUT THE CORD, FER CHRIS'SAKE!! I MEAN, I MAY HAVE TAKEN THE KID CAMPING, WE MAY HAVE DONE LITTLE LEAGUE TOGETHER, BUT SEVERING UMBILICAL CORDS IN TANDEM IS NOT EXACTLY MY IDEA OF FATHER AND SON QUALITY TIME.
SO, YOU JUST TOOK OFF...
TIM BARELA
...LARRY, YOU MAY BE MY EMPLOYER AND SIGN MY PAY-CHECKS, BUT, HONESTLY, SOMETIMES YOU CAN BE ONE HELL OF A HORSE'S ASS!... WHEN I THINK OF ALL THE MEN AND WOMEN OUT THERE, DESPERATE TO HAVE FAMILIES OF THEIR OWN, DENIED THE RIGHT TO ADOPT, SOMETIMES EVEN DENIED CUSTODY OF THEIR OWN CHILDREN... AND WHY? JUST BECAUSE THEY'RE LESBIAN OR GAY.
...AND THEN THERE'S LARRY EVANS, A GAY MAN WHO WAS NEVER DENIED THE GOOD RELATIONSHIP HE HAS WITH BOTH OF HIS KIDS. TONIGHT, HIS OLDEST SON—WHO LOVES HIM—GAVE LARRY SOMETHING LOTS OF OTHER GAY MEN WOULD GLADLY TRADE THEIR RIGHT ARMS FOR... A GRANDCHILD, FREE AND CLEAR, COMPLETE WITH HIS NAME ATTACHED... BUT LARRY WASN'T THERE TO WELCOME THE NEWEST MEMBER OF HIS FAMILY. HE WAS TOO BUSY BEING A HORSE'S ASS, FRETTING ABOUT GROWING OLD AND FEELING SORRY FOR HIMSELF...
...SITTING ON THE CURB IN FRONT OF HIS SHOP, DRINKING FROM A BOTTLE OF CHEAP BOOZE IN A BROWN PAPER SACK!
THIS ISN'T ALCOHOL, IT'S A BOTTLE OF THAT CHOCOLATE FLAVORED SOFT DRINK WITH THE YELLOW LABEL.
YOU MEAN THE STUFF THAT LOOKS LIKE DIRTY RADIATOR FLUID?... EEECH!! KEEP IT IN THE SACK!

...I SWEAR, I COULD JUST THROTTLE YOUR FATHER FOR DESERTING YOU LIKE HE DID!
OH WELL, I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER THAN TO ASK HIM TO HELP ME IN THE DELIVERY ROOM; HE'S NEVER BEEN ABLE TO HANDLE ANYTHING THE LEAST BIT BLOODY... ANYWAY, DAD'S ALWAYS BEEN TOUCHY ABOUT GROWING OLD. MAKING HIM A GRANDFATHER FOR HIS THIRTY NINTH BIRTHDAY DIDN'T HELP.
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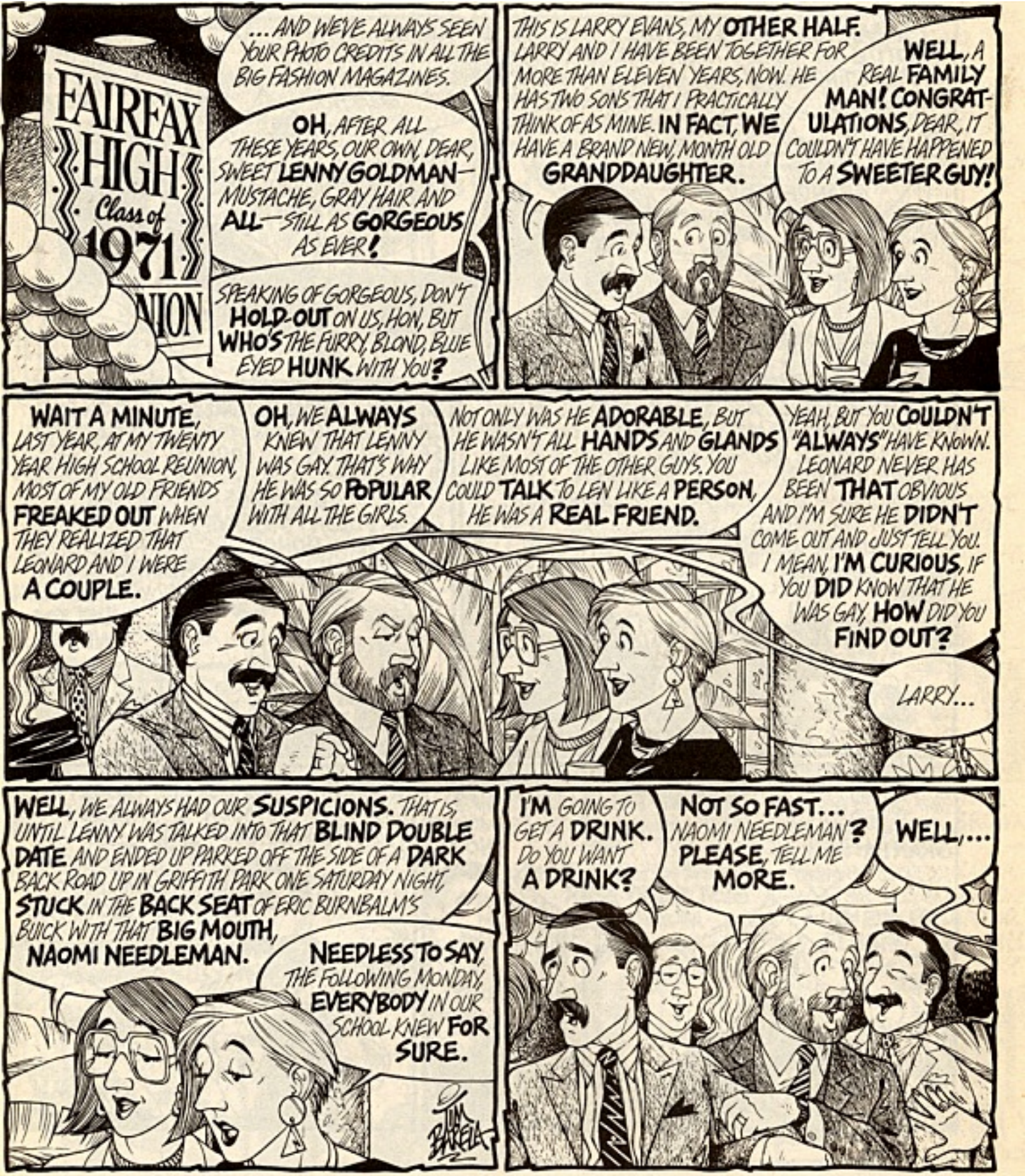
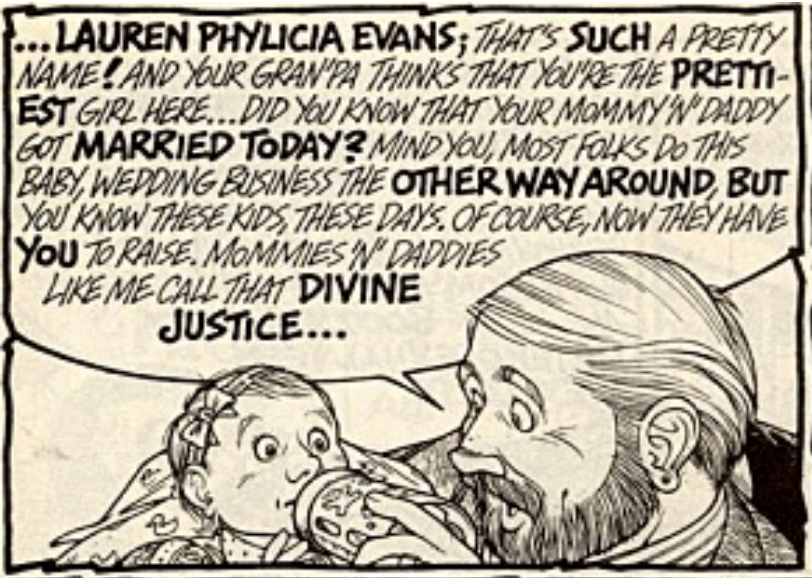
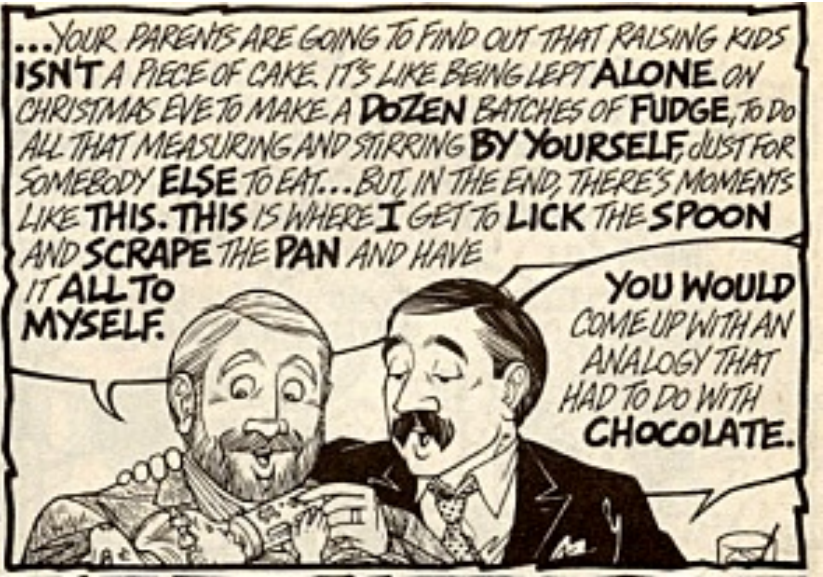
RICHIE, LOOK WHO CAME TO SIT WITH US WHILE YOUR MOM AND MY PARENTS WENT TO BREAKFAST.
DAD! YOU CAME BACK!
LARRY! LARRY, WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?!
SSSHHH! SHE JUST ATE AND FINALLY WENT TO SLEEP. ...OH LEONARD, ISN'T SHE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL, MOST PERFECT THING YOU'VE EVER SEEN IN YOUR ENTIRE LIFE?!
DAD, DID DEBBIE TELL YOU WHAT WE DECIDED TO NAME HER? WE FINALLY SETTLED ON LAUREN... YOU KNOW, LIKE LAWRENCE.
YOU MEAN, AFTER ME?... NO, YOU CAN'T... RICHARD, YOUR FATHER IS A SELFISH, VAIN, VERY FOOLISH OLD MAN WHO DOESN'T KNOW HOW TO APPRECIATE BLESSINGS LIKE THIS. HE DOESN'T DESERVE THAT KIND OF HONOR.
LOOK DAD, IT WAS EITHER YOU OR NAME THE BABY AFTER DEBBIE'S FATHER. THEN WE WOULD'VE HAD TO CALL HER PHYLIS OR EVEN PHILLIPA. HAVING A KID NAMED PHILLIPA IS JUST TOO WEIRD...
...BESIDES, I DON'T THINK THAT LAUREN WILL CARE IF HER NAMESAKE—HER GRAN'PA—IS JUST AS IMPERFECT AS EVERY-ONE ELSE. SHE'S GOING TO LOVE YOU ANYWAY.
SHE'D BETTER! I'M ALREADY DOING SILLY GRANDFATHER THINGS FOR HER. BEFORE I CAME BACK, I WENT TO MY SHOP AND GOT HER THE BIG-GEST TEDDY BEAR WE HAD.
A TEDDY BEAR?... FROM YOUR SHOP?
...LARRY, DON'T YOU THINK THAT THIS IS A BIT MUCH FOR A NEWBORN?
IT'S COOL; THAT'S MY DAD!
LOOK, SHE'S SMILING AT HER GRAN'PA!
JIM KARPELA

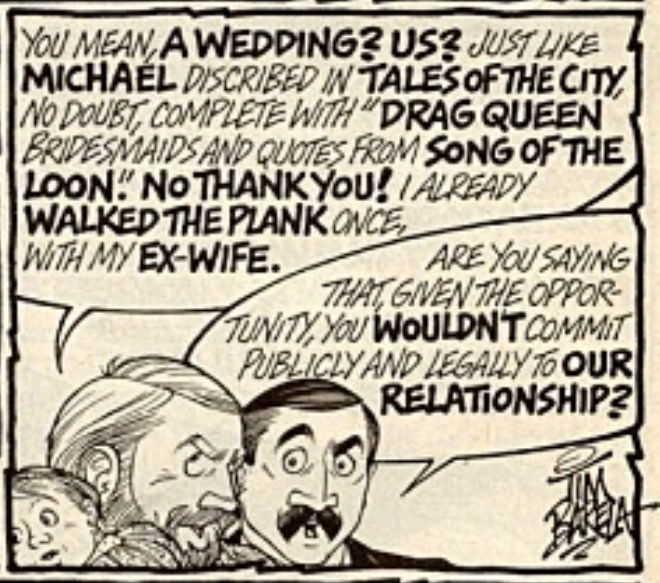

FAIRFAX HIGH
Class of 1971
REUNION
...AND WE'VE ALWAYS SEEN YOUR PHOTO CREDITS IN ALL THE BIG FASHION MAGAZINES.
OH, AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, OUR OWN, DEAR, SWEET LENNY GOLDMAN— MUSTACHE, GRAY HAIR AND ALL— STILL AS GORGEOUS AS EVER!
SPEAKING OF GORGEOUS, DON'T HOLD-OUT ON US, HON, BUT WHO'S THE FURRY, BLOND, BLUE EYED HUNK WITH YOU?
THIS IS LARRY EVANS, MY OTHER HALF. LARRY AND I HAVE BEEN TOGETHER FOR MORE THAN ELEVEN YEARS, NOW. HE HAS TWO SONS THAT I PRACTICALLY THINK OF AS MINE. IN FACT, WE HAVE A BRAND NEW, MONTH OLD GRANDDAUGHTER.
WELL, A REAL FAMILY MAN! CONGRATULATIONS, DEAR, IT COULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED TO A SWEETER GUY!
WAIT A MINUTE, LAST YEAR, AT MY TWENTY YEAR HIGH SCHOOL REUNION, MOST OF MY OLD FRIENDS FREAKED OUT WHEN THEY REALIZED THAT LEONARD AND I WERE A COUPLE.
OH, WE ALWAYS KNEW THAT LENNY WAS GAY. THAT'S WHY HE WAS SO POPULAR WITH ALL THE GIRLS.
NOT ONLY WAS HE ADORABLE, BUT HE WASN'T ALL HANDS AND GLANDS LIKE MOST OF THE OTHER GUYS. YOU COULD TALK TO LEN LIKE A PERSON, HE WAS A REAL FRIEND.
YEAH, BUT YOU COULDN'T "ALWAYS" HAVE KNOWN. LEONARD NEVER HAS BEEN THAT OBVIOUS AND I'M SURE HE DIDN'T COME OUT AND JUST TELL YOU. I MEAN, I'M CURIOUS, IF YOU DID KNOW THAT HE WAS GAY, HOW DID YOU FIND OUT?
LARRY...
WELL, WE ALWAYS HAD OUR SUSPICIONS. THAT IS, UNTIL LENNY WAS TALKED INTO THAT BLIND DOUBLE DATE AND ENDED UP PARKED OFF THE SIDE OF A DARK BACK ROAD UP IN GRIFFITH PARK ONE SATURDAY NIGHT, STUCK IN THE BACK SEAT OF ERIC BURNBALM'S BUICK WITH THAT BIG MOUTH, NAOMI NEEDLEMAN.
NEEDLESS TO SAY, THE FOLLOWING MONDAY, EVERYBODY IN OUR SCHOOL KNEW FOR SURE.
JIM BARELA '12
I'M GOING TO GET A DRINK. DO YOU WANT A DRINK?
NOT SO FAST... NAOMI NEEDLEMAN? PLEASE, TELL ME MORE.
WELL,...

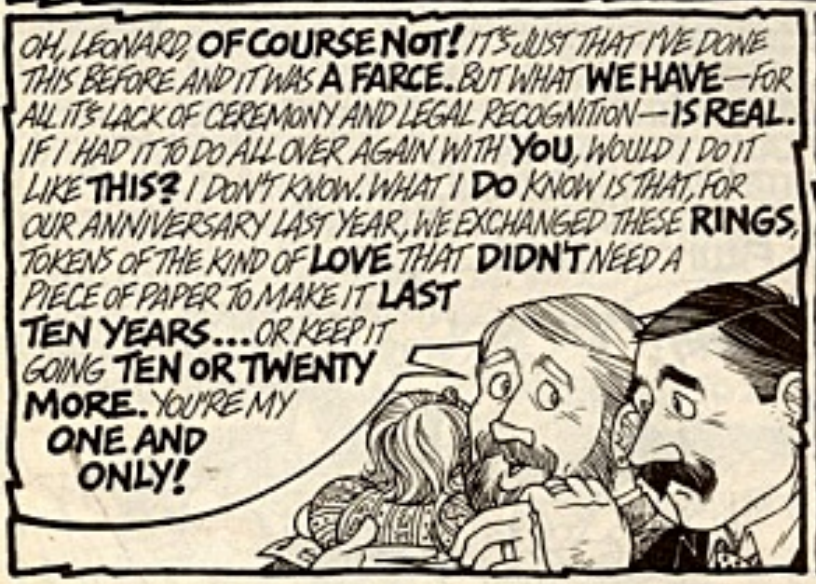
...YOU'RE ENJOYING THIS, AREN'T YOU? YOU ARE DELIBERATELY TORMENTING ME, MAKING ME SUFFER AND HAVING A GREAT TIME!
YOU KNOW, LEONARD, THE OLDER YOU GET, THE MORE AND MORE YOU SOUND LIKE YOUR MOTHER; THE LONG SUFFERING MARTYR, RACKED WITH SUSPICION, INCESSANTLY FEELING PERSECUTED.
I CAN'T HELP IT— I'M GAY AND I'M JEWISH— IT COMES WITH THE TERRITORY!... YOU'RE PUNISHING ME. YOU'RE PUNISHING ME BECAUSE I HAD FUN AT YOUR EXPENSE LAST YEAR, AFTER YOUR TWENTY YEAR HIGH SCHOOL REUNION, TELLING ALL OUR FRIENDS ABOUT YOUR OLD "BOSOM" BUDDY, GARY STRINGFELLOW, AND ALL YOUR BOOZY, SLEAZY, HETEROSEXUAL TEEN EXPLOITS...
...WELL, I'M SORRY! HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO SAY IT?... LARRY, ISN'T SIMPLY KNOWING THAT THERE WAS A NAOMI NEEDLEMAN IN MY HIGH SCHOOL PAST GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU? THAT EPISODE WITH HER IN THE BACK SEAT OF ERIC BURNBALM'S CAR WAS ONE OF THE MOST TRAUMATIC, HOMOSEXUALLY AFFIRMING EXPERIENCES OF MY ADOLESCENCE! MUST YOU INSIST ON USING THAT KNOWLEDGE TO TAUNT AND HUMILIATE ME LIKE THIS?!
LIKE WHAT? WHEN DID YOU SEE ME WRINGING MY HANDS, SCHEMING IN CHILDISH FITS OF VINDICTIVE GLEE? WHEN DID I, SO MUCH AS, BREATHE A WORD OF ANY OF THIS TO ANYONE WE KNOW? EVEN AT YOUR HIGH SCHOOL REUNION, AFTER FINDING OUT THAT NAOMI AND ERIC WERE MARRIED AND MEETING THE TWO OF THEM— LOVELY COUPLE— FOR MYSELF, DID I SAY ANYTHING? DID I TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION?
OF COURSE YOU DID! YOU WERE DELIBERATELY NICE TO TO THEM, LARRY. YOU PURPOSEFULLY WON THIER CONFIDENCE AND FRIENDSHIP AND INVITED ERIC AND NAOMI BURNBALM TO OUR HOUSE FOR DINNER NEXT SATURDAY NIGHT!!
AND WHAT A LOVELY EVENING I'M SURE WE'LL ALL HAVE! A GATHERING OF OLD FRIENDS, REMINISCING, TRIPPING DOWN LOVERS'... I MEAN, MEMORY LANE. SUCH AN OCCASION DESERVES AN APPROPRIATE FEAST: WHITE WINE AND QUICHE, PERHAPS, MAYBE A ROAST CHICKEN WITH A NICE SAUSAGE STUFFING, AND, OF COURSE, FOR DESSERT, FRUIT FLAMBÉ...
UGGGHH!
© TIM BARELA '12


...LAUREN PHYLICIA EVANS; THAT'S SUCH A PRETTY NAME! AND YOUR GRAN'PA THINKS THAT YOU'RE THE PRETTIEST GIRL HERE... DID YOU KNOW THAT YOUR MOMMY 'N' DADDY GOT MARRIED TODAY? MIND YOU, MOST FOLKS DO THIS BABY, WEDDING BUSINESS THE OTHER WAY AROUND, BUT YOU KNOW THESE KIDS, THESE DAYS. OF COURSE, NOW THEY HAVE YOU TO RAISE. MOMMIES 'N' DADDIES LIKE ME CALL THAT DIVINE JUSTICE...


...YOUR PARENTS ARE GOING TO FIND OUT THAT RAISING KIDS ISN'T A PIECE OF CAKE. IT'S LIKE BEING LEFT ALONE ON CHRISTMAS EVE TO MAKE A DOZEN BATCHES OF FUDGE, TO DO ALL THAT MEASURING AND STIRRING BY YOURSELF, JUST FOR SOMEBODY ELSE TO EAT... BUT, IN THE END, THERE'S MOMENTS LIKE THIS. THIS IS WHERE I GET TO LICK THE SPOON AND SCRAPE THE PAN AND HAVE IT ALL TO MYSELF.
YOU WOULD COME UP WITH AN ANALOGY THAT HAD TO DO WITH CHOCOLATE.

YOU HEAR SO MUCH THESE DAYS ABOUT ACTIVISTS TRYING TO GET MARRIAGE LICENCES, FIGHTING TO LEGALIZE GAY MARRIAGES... LARRY, DO YOU EVER REGRET THAT WE JUST MOVED IN TOGETHER ALL THOSE YEARS AGO, THAT WE NEVER HAD SOME KIND OF CEREMONY—YOU KNOW, A RITE OF PASSAGE?


YOU MEAN, A WEDDING? US? JUST LIKE MICHAEL DISCRIBED IN TALES OF THE CITY, NO DOUBT, COMPLETE WITH "DRAG QUEEN BRIDESMAIDS AND QUOTES FROM SONG OF THE LOON." NO THANK YOU! I ALREADY WALKED THE PLANK ONCE, WITH MY EX-WIFE.
ARE YOU SAYING THAT, GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY, YOU WOULDN'T COMMIT PUBLICLY AND LEGALLY TO OUR RELATIONSHIP?
JIM


OH, LEONARD, OF COURSE NOT! IT'S JUST THAT I'VE DONE THIS BEFORE AND IT WAS A FARCE. BUT WHAT WE HAVE—FOR ALL IT'S LACK OF CEREMONY AND LEGAL RECOGNITION—IS REAL. IF I HAD IT TO DO ALL OVER AGAIN WITH YOU, WOULD I DO IT LIKE THIS? I DON'T KNOW. WHAT I DO KNOW IS THAT, FOR OUR ANNIVERSARY LAST YEAR, WE EXCHANGED THESE RINGS, TOKENS OF THE KIND OF LOVE THAT DIDN'T NEED A PIECE OF PAPER TO MAKE IT LAST TEN YEARS... OR KEEP IT GOING TEN OR TWENTY MORE. YOU'RE MY ONE AND ONLY!

AVERT YOUR EYES, DEAR, AND JUST KEEP TELLING YOURSELF, "HE'S ONLY A RELATION BY ACCIDENT OF MARRIAGE; HE'S ONLY A RELATION BY ACCIDENT OF MARRIAGE; HE'S ONLY..."

# TIM BARELA

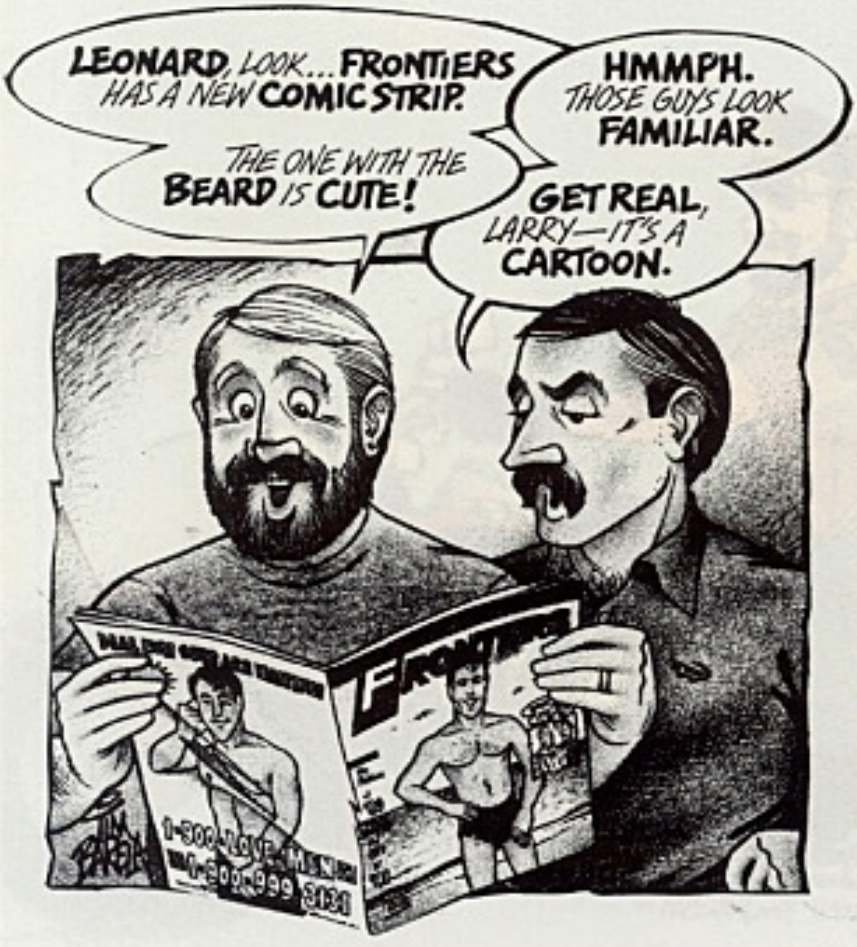
Born in Los Angeles in 1954, a native Californian of Hispanic/ German/ Cherokee extraction, **Tim Barela** began working professionally as a cartoonist in the mid-70's. An avid motorcycle enthusiast, he contributed weekly to Cycle News, for the tidy sum of ten dollars for each installment of his unnamed comic strip.

The opportunity to write and draw new comic strips — all of which had names — for other motorcycle publications followed. At one point, Tim contributed to four different magazines at one time! Among his creations (search those back issue bins) were: "Just Puttin" in Biker, "Short Strokes" in Cycle World, "Hard Tale" in Choppers, and three strips in Biker Lifestyle, "The Adventures of Rickie Racer," The Adventures of Eric Enchilada," and "The Puttin Gourmet. . . America's Favorite Low-Life Epicurean." Whew!

In the 80's, Tim's personal life and career took a radical turn out the closet door. It was at that time that Tim decided to give two minor gay characters from an unpublished, abandoned project, their own comic strip. Upon the insistence of friends, Tim submitted samples of the new strip to The Advocate, and was flatly turned down with a tersely-worded, two-line rejection letter. **Robert Triptow**, then editing Gay Comix, was not so inclined, and "Leonard & Larry" made its first appearance in 1984.

Four years later, with a little help from friend and fellow cartoonist, **Jerry Mills**, the new editorial staff of The Advocate had a change of heart and "Leonard & Larry" joined **Alison Bechdel**'s "Servants to the Cause" and **Gerard Donelan**'s "It's A Gay Life" as regular features.

The 90's brought new directions and changes to The Advocate. Unfortunately, the changes meant dropping Tim and Alison's strips. Fortunately, the loyalty Tim had found in the two-years of publication inspired Frontiers Magazine to adopt "Leonard & Larry", where it appears, bi-weekly, to this day.



LEONARD, LOOK... FRONTIERS HAS A NEW COMIC STRIP.
HMMPH. THOSE GUYS LOOK FAMILIAR.
THE ONE WITH THE BEARD IS CUTE!
GET REAL, LARRY—IT'S A CARTOON.
FRONTIERS

Leonard & Larry

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"Tim Barella's **Leonard & Larry** strips are earthy, elegant, and truthful."
**— Howard Cruse, *Wendel***

"I love how Tim Barella draws **Leonard & Larry**. He lavishes the same meticulous draftsmanship on a background electrical outlet as he does on these charming and very human characters."
**— Allison Bechdel, *Dykes To Watch Out For***

"**Leonard & Larry** is everyone's favorite gay couple. . . as matter-of-fact as a backyard barbecue, and just as fun. Barella offers a trenchant barometer of gay life in these times."
**— Mark Thompson, Senior Editor, *The Advocate***

"In an imperfect world, **Leonard & Larry** are an imperfect couple - and that's what makes these cartoon queers so honest and endearing."
**— Richard Labonté, Manager, *A Different Light Bookstores***

"Too often, cartoons choke us with vague political issues. **Leonard & Larry** has a way of presenting politics in day-to-day gay life in a way that makes us think while we laugh."
**— "D" Cannon, International Mr. Leather 1991-92**